

Windsor Locks History

by
Melvin D. Montemerlo



Main Street before and after redevelopment

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Putting this book together turned out to be a community effort. Thank you all very much. This book could not have been written without you.

Mel Montemerlo

Introduction

Windsor Locks' old Main Street, with places like the A&P, Ray LaRussa's store, Coly's Hotel, Syd's Modern Drug, Bidwell's, the Donut Kettle, Wuzzy's, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, and the Ashmere Inn, is now "history". That was the Windsor Locks that I grew up in. I moved away to start my career in 1970 when the "Main Street Re-development" project bought up and demolished all of the downtown businesses, which caused the old dynamic, vibrant Main Street to disappear into history. As of this writing in 2017, the young adults of Windsor Locks are too young to remember that historic old Main Street. Those of us who do remember are "senior citizens". Some of us still live in Windsor Locks. Some, like myself, are ex-patriots of Windsor Locks, who now live elsewhere, but still love the town we grew up in. We enjoy remembering the old Main Street. We are first or second generation offspring of the immigrants who came to Windsor Locks in the early 1900s. We remember our parents and grandparents and their stories and photos of the Windsor Locks of their time.

It occurred to me that the history of Windsor Locks from 1900 to 1975 needs to be written now, while those of us who lived the latter part of that timeframe, still remember. Luckily my grandmother, Anna Colapietro, collected hundreds of photos of family, friends, places and events of Windsor Locks from 1904 to about 1950. She gave them to her daughter, Lena (Colapietro) Montemerlo, who was my mother. I was fascinated by those photos, so Mom and I spent a great deal of time going through the photos. She would tell me the names of the people, places, events and times of as many of those photos as she could. I scanned the photos, improved their quality, and added captions with relevant information.

In 2016, I started posting those photos on two Facebook Internet pages for people from Windsor Locks. Those pages were: the "You know you are from Windsor Locks when," and the "Windsor Locks Historical Society" pages. It was obvious from the responses that there was a good deal of interest in the history of Windsor Locks. I received feedback on the photos. People posted other photos from that time. There was a great deal of sharing of information. This led me to write an article about the early Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks, and to post the draft on those two websites. Folks posted additional information, asked questions, and made suggestions for the final draft.

That led to a second article on the early pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks. I slowed down after writing about 40 articles on the history of Windsor Locks. I received requests from John Karas, the editor of the Windsor Locks Journal, to develop short versions of these articles that he could put in his weekly newspaper. Tim Jensen, of the Enfield Patch, also requested short versions that he could publish.

Two former Windsor Locksians, one of whom is a Windsor Locks historian, and one of whom is a bookseller, suggested strongly that I turn the set of articles into a book. The historian, Phil Devlin, had already published a book about Dr. Carniglia, and offered advice on the publishing process. The bookseller, Robin Kaye Gutterman, told me that history books about small towns are valuable, and urged me to publish the book in paper form as well as a downloadable computer file.

I was familiar with what had been written about the history of Windsor Locks. Only one history book about our town has been written prior to this one. It is Jabez Haskell Hayden's "Historical Sketches," which was published in 1900. It covered the history of the town from the 1600s to 1900. Jack Redmond covered the period from 1975 to 2000 with 1200 columns in the Windsor Locks Journal. So the only part of the history of Windsor Locks that hasn't been written is the time from 1900 to 1975, which was the primary focus of my articles. Some of the chapters, by necessity, go back to the 1700s and 1800s.

As I wrote my articles, which became the chapters of this book, I followed the advice of Jack Redmond, which he described in his first column in the Windsor Locks Journal on April 24, 1975. He said:

People want to hear and read about the people who make the news in Windsor Locks. People who have made their marks in our town by way of the political, civic, fraternal and coaching circles. My reasons are very simple ... people make the best stories. Events happen and mostly, in this day and age, for the worst, so the best items are still people.

I took Jack's advice and wrote most of the chapters in this book about Windsor Locks people who have "made their mark". To make the chapters more interesting and fun to read, I have included about 400 old photos, and about 150 old newspaper articles. It is informative and fun to read about people and events in the newspaper articles of their time.

You can download the book from the Internet Archive, which can be found at: <https://archive.org/>

You can do a computer search on "Windsor Locks History" to find other websites from which you can download the book.

For information on obtaining a printed copy of the book, please contact me at: mel@windsorlockshistory.com or contact the Windsor Locks Historical Society.

The Windsor Locks Historical Society is doing wonderful work in collecting, organizing and disseminating information on the history of our town. I hope that this book can help them in their work.

I hope this book brings you much enjoyment. I hope that it helps you visualize "the old Windsor Locks," and helps you describe our town's past to your children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much.

Mel Montemerlo

October 28, 2017

Chapter 1

Growing Up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s

INTRODUCTION:

This article attempts to summarize the things that characterized our environment when we were growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. We all had different experiences. That's what makes each of us unique. However, there were cultural factors, places, people and happenings which almost all of us experienced while growing up in Windsor Locks at that time. This article takes a nostalgic look at our youth, and the things we had in common. These are the experiences that make us unique as the children of Windsor Locks of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. An occasional glance back at our roots is both instructive and rewarding. The following are things that most of experienced in that time frame. Let's take a look at what we had in common, back when we were lucky enough to grow up in Windsor Locks. They include:

- ethnic heritage
- we were "Free Range Kids"
- services came to the home
- the birth of rock and roll
- the Cold War
- St. Mary's Park (now called Pesci Park)
- Summer jobs in the tobacco fields
- the ice skating rink on Center St
- St. Oronzo Day
- Dr. Carniglia
- the Rialto Theater
- the town dump
- Ethnic markets (Johnny Cappa's store, Aldo's Oak Street Market, Preli's Market, Barberi's bakery and Sisitzki's Market)
- Bradley Field
- Babb's Beach
- East Windsor Drive-In
- Railroad Salvage
- Riverside Park
- ice cream stores (Wuzzy's, Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy, Dairy Cream)
- pizza and grinder stores (ADs, Second Poquonock, H&M, Pizza Parlor)
- Main Street before re-development
- The Box from the Locks
- 1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions
- Blanche's Bowling Alley
- 1954 Windsor Locks Centennial Celebration

Our Ethnic Heritage (Family Life)

Life in Windsor Locks was a bit like life in the “Leave it to Beaver” series on TV, except it was much more “ethnic”. Windsor Locks, at the time, was home to immigrants, their children and their grandchildren. They were mostly English, Irish, French, Italian and Polish. The cultural heritage of our nationality played a big role in our childhood. We spent an enormous amount of time with our parents and our grandparents. Meals, gatherings and parties included their relatives and friends. In my case, they all had Italian names. The older ones spoke Italian when they didn’t want the children to know what they were talking about. They often they moved back and forth between Italian and English in the same sentence. While my family was Italian, my friends and classmates had names like: Ouellette, McKenna, Carroll, Dzurich, Czarnecki, Root, Pohorylo, Tomaczek, O’Leary, Gallagher, Harvey, Babiarz, Flanagan, Norieka, and Taylor. Of course, there were Italian names like LaRussa, Roncari, Taravella, Rossi, Marconi, Tria, Pesci, Ferrari, Barbieri and Quagliaroli.

But while we were brought up in very ethnic environments, our parents wanted us to go to school, study hard, and become good American citizens. I remember my uncles telling me that their father (my grandfather, Vito Colapietro) told them repeatedly: “No cigars, no mustaches, go to school, go to college. I want you to be good Americans”. Of course, much of this push for this was very practical. If you want to succeed in business in Windsor Locks, you can’t just speak Italian. I never saw trouble between people of different nationalities while I was growing up in Windsor Locks

We were “Free Range Kids”. Our parents were not “Helicopter Parents”.

The late 1940s, 50s and 60s were a peaceful time. Our uncles had come back from WWII and were getting married and building lives. We (the kids) lived lives that were a bit idyllic. We rode big heavy one-speed bikes. We often left home early on Saturday morning and went off to play with friends. We went from house to house. Sometimes a mother would phone other moms to let them know where we were. Now, in 2017, kids who roam around without close parental supervision are called “Free Range Kids”, and their parents are often admonished for letting their kids do that. Back then, we didn’t have “Helicopter Parents” who hovered over us. It was a time when the doors of our houses were often left unlocked. The back door of the house was usually open in the good weather, and an unlatched screen door was the only thing stopping you from entering.

We felt comfortable growing up in Windsor Locks. We visited friends and rode our bikes around freely. The group I went to kindergarten with walked about five blocks from Grove Street to the public elementary school on Church Street. We climbed trees and played games without any planning. Nowadays, there are things like “arranged play-dates” for preschoolers, where parents contact each other, make specific plans, drop kids off and pick them up. Back then we hopped on our bikes and went off for the morning, not knowing exactly where the group would be, but we found them and we figured out what to do.

School was much different back then. If a teacher or a principal called our parents, we would be asked “WHAT DID YOU DO WRONG?” Now, if a teacher

complains about a student, the parents are likely go to the school and complain about the teacher. To put it simply, life was much simpler back then.

Service Came to the Home

Technology was different back then. When we were in pre-school and in grammar school, we remember:

- leaving a note for the milkman to leave something extra today.
- the coal truck delivering coal to our homes
- the mailman putting mail in a mailbox attached to the house near the front door.
- the paperboy or girl leaving the paper between the front door and the screen door if you asked them to. Of course, they expected a tip at Christmas for doing that.
- the man who made bleach and delivered it to your house.
- Viking Bakery delivered to your house
- Dr. Carneglia made house calls.

The Birth of Rock and Roll

The end of the forties was the end of the “old music”: Perry Como, Vaughn Monroe, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Dinah Shore, and Frankie Laine. It was the heyday of the Ed Sullivan Show. It was the beginning of ROCK AND ROLL. It was the time when 78 RPM records were going out of style, and being replaced by 45 RPM records. We spent a lot of time listening to 45s.

The Cold War

The Cold War was in full swing. In school, and on TV, we heard about building bomb shelters. We even practiced what to do in case of an aerial attack by the Communists.

St. Mary’s Park

The formal name back then was “the Public Park”, but we called it “St. Mary’s Park” because it was right behind St. Mary’s school. Now it is called “Pesci Park”. This was the center of youth activity in Windsor Locks back in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It was the place to find pickup games of sandlot baseball, basketball and football. It is where Little League Baseball was played. It had the swimming pool where we took swimming lessons on summer mornings. There was the green wooden building in which we did crafts during the summer months. On weekend evenings in the summer, there were outdoor movies and record hops on the basketball court. At the end of the summer, there were contests for the youngsters. For example, there were craft contests, and contests for the best decorated bicycles and wagons. The side of St. Mary’s school next to the parking lot was used for practicing tennis. Below is a photo of the swimming pool and of a newspaper article from the Springfield Union of August 27, 1955, giving the names of children who won swimming awards.



The pool at what is now known as Pesci Park.

Prizes Go to Children As Play Season Ends

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 31—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds yesterday afternoon attracted a large audience of both children and adults, and prizes were awarded for the various events as follows:

Doll carriage parade, prettiest, Corinne Ouelette; second, Jane Doyle; third, Irene Dell'Avano; most original, Vito Colapietro; bicycle parade, prettiest, Nancy Frost; most original, Melvin Montemerlo; tricycle parade, prettiest, Robert Daniel; first, James Logan, second; wagon parade, prettiest, James Dwones; most original, Lynn Casey.

Costume parade, prettiest, Susan Grady; funniest, Rita Crowley; most original, Elaine Ouelette; hat parade, prettiest, Joyce Micha; funniest, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating

est, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating contest, five to nine years group, Douglas Quagliaroli; 10 to 14 years group, William Wegrzyniak.

Crafts awards, three to seven years group, Jack Kennedy, Jane Doyle, Irene Del Favaro, Betty Logan, Phyllis LaRussa, Ellen Taravella, Robert Pasternerlo, Sharon Root, Ronald Quagliaroli; eight and nine years group, Susan Grady, Phyllis Quagliaroli, Patricia Kane, Jane Taravella, Donna Scott, Clair Galleran, Susan Root, Nancy Frost, Melvin Montemerlo; 11 to 13 years group, Patricia Samuelrich, Georg-

ine Glaney, Judy Gallerani, Marlene Ciparelli, Marilyn Kennedy, Patricia Kennedy, John Lee, Virginia Kane, bean guessing contest, 603 in the jar, Robert Alekson guessed 500.

More than 70 children entered the various contests, and more than 500 persons attended the program, which was under direction of Miss Nancy Redway, supervisor of children's activities at the playgrounds. Judges were Mrs. Norris J. King, Mrs. William J. McCue and Mrs. Albert W. Mr. Robert Alekson guessed 500.

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At the park swimming pool, the closing program included a water festival, and prizes were awarded as follows: balloon race, Sarah Wallace; relay race, Patricia Kennedy, Robert Fuller, Dale Harris, Gloria Zetterholm, Robert Oliva, Bernard Hanson; boys' races, seven to eight years group, Thomas Kane, first; Richard Colo, second; nine and 10 years group, Bernard Hanson, first; Peter Campbell, second; 11 to 13 years group, William Wegrzyniak, first, Robert Nevich, second; 14 to 16 years group, Edward Young, first, Robert Levesque, second; girls' races, nine to 11 years group, Karlene Ciparelli, first, Mary Ann Paluck, second; 12 to 14 years group,

Springfield Union, September 1, 1952

Playgrounds Close; Swim Prizes Given

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 26—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds on Chestnut St., were held yesterday afternoon. The program was in charge of Miss Nancy Fuller, supervisor. Judges were Mrs. Joseph C. Becker, Mrs. Robert H. Fuller, Miss Jane Ann Downes and Miss Carol Wallace.

At the swimming pool, awards were presented to members of swimming classes by Albert J. Holmes, Red Cross instructor, and William Price, assistant. The following received awards:

Intermediate certificates, Dorothy C. Barbieri, Helen Blakeney, Carole M. Castoldi, William Devlin, Mary Ellen Flanagan, Charla Jean McDonald, Brenda J. O'Leary, Cornelius P. O'Leary, Ann Marie Pikul, Dorothy Pilkington, Douglas Quagliaroli, Dagmar Woods, Dietmar Woods, Shirley Young and Peter Samuelrich.

Beginners, Richard Hinckley, James Allen, Joan Becker, Charlotte Mae Becker, Brian A. Burke, Susan Brown, Theresa Carroll, David Sheridan, Vivian Walters, Douglas J. Castoldi, Susan Pikul, Frederick Dearborn, David A. Draghi, Eugene Pilkington, Janice Dzurick, June M. Pikul, Bradford Fuller, Donald Quagliaroli, Sherry Lee Gifford, Bruce Riggott,

Cornelius P. O'Leary, Ann Marie Pikul, Dorothy Pilkington, Douglas Quagliaroli, Dagmar Woods, Dietmar Woods, Shirley Young and Peter Samuelrich.

Beginners, Richard Hinckley, James Allen, Joan Becker, Charlotte Mae Becker, Brian A. Burke, Susan Brown, Theresa Carroll, David Sheridan, Vivian Walters, Douglas J. Castoldi, Susan Pikul, Frederick Dearborn, David A. Draghi, Eugene Pilkington, Janice Dzurick, June M. Pikul, Bradford Fuller, Donald Quagliaroli, Sherry Lee Gifford, Bruce Riggott, John Gokey, Beverly Ann Sabine, John Kennedy, Alice Marie Sheehan, William M. Meehan, Martina Sheridan, William O'Brien and Richard Taravella.

Swimmers' class, Thomas Kane, Melvin Montemerlo, Lewis Krupa, Jane Taravella, Patty Kane, Peggy Draghi, Ann Marie Barbieri and Robert Pastermerlo.

Junior lifesaving class, Virginia Kane, Malcolm Berman, Gail Root, Susan Root, Patty Kane, Patty Allen, Jane Taravella, Peggy Draghi and Louis Krupa.

Activities at the playgrounds were brought to a close this afternoon although the public swimming pool will be open for another week.

Springfield Union, Saturday, August 27, 1955

The above article gives the names of the winners of a number of contest at the park, including prettiest doll carriage, crafts and costumes. Following is a photo of the baseball field in St. Mary's Park that was the scene of so many pickup and Little League games. You can see the bleachers behind the field. That was often used for hanging around even when no games were being played on the baseball field. No single place in Windsor Locks was the scene of so many youth activities as this park.



Baseball field at what is now known as Pesci Park

Summer Jobs in the Tobacco Fields

In Connecticut, you can work in stores or factories once you are 16 years old. From 14 to 16 years old, you can only work on a farm. For decades, Windsor Locks youths from 14 to 16 years old have worked on tobacco farms in and around the town. It has long been a “right of passage”. The pay is low. The work is dirty. The bus to take you to the farms leaves before 6AM. Yet Windsor Locks youths have found that the experience is worth it. You not only earned a few dollars, and got some exercise, you learned that you need to do well in school so you can get better jobs when grow up.

Connecticut tobacco is “shade grown” under massive white tents which protect them from the sun and the elements . This tobacco is used for wrapping cigars so the leaves have to be “unmarked,” that is, not flawed by creases, rips, cuts or holes. There are jobs under the massive tents, and other jobs in the tobacco sheds (barns). In the fields, teams of three boys pick the leaves. Two boys picked the leaves and one put the pads of leaves in a cart which he pulled along. In the barns, the girls “sewed” the leaves onto a long string. Those strings were hung up by boys in the higher levels of the shed.

Below are photos of tobacco fields without nets, and of tobacco leaves in a shed.



Tobacco field before nets are put over the wires

- Some of the tobacco farms which hired Windsor Locks youths were
- Ritchie and Kenny Christian in Poquonock
 - Raffia in Enfield
 - Orie Champigny in Windsor Locks, and
 - Meyer and Mendelson in Windsor.



Tobacco leaves hanging to dry in a shed

The following photo shows that things haven't changed in the tobacco fields since 1927.



Tobacco workers in Enfield, 1927

The Ice Skating Rink on Center Street

Almost everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, remembers the ice skating rink near the corner of Center St, and Whiton St. It was down the hill from the ballpark behind St. Mary's school. It wasn't fancy. There was a small shed with a pot belly stove where you could change into your ice skates.

Below are two photos of that ice skating rink. In the second photo, you can see the small warming shed. There were no covered ice skating rinks anywhere near Windsor Locks. This was a popular spot on winter days and early evenings.



Ice Skating rink on Center Street near Whiton St.



Ice Skating rink on Center St. Warming shed is on the right.

St. Oronzo Day Celebrations

Many of the Italian immigrants in Windsor Locks came from near the city of Bari in southern Italy. Just south of Bari is a small village named Turi. The patron saint of Turi is St. Oronzo. My grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, came from Turi. Vito owned and operated Coly's Hotel, across from the Train Station. He became president of the St. Oronzo Society for a while in the 1940s. Here is a photo of the statue of St. Oronzo in front of St. Mary's Church, where it was housed every day except for St. Oronzo day, when it was taken out for the parade. Folks remember the strings of dollar bills were pinned to the statue as a donation. I



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*

After the parade, which included an Italian band, marched through the downtown area, the celebration moved to a field where there was Italian food, music and games. At night, the celebration ended with a big fireworks display. In Windsor Locks, St. Oronzo Day is a bit like St. Patrick's Day. Everyone celebrates both. Often they were celebrated in Stella's Charles-Ten Polish Restaurant.

Dr. Carneglia

It was impossible to live in Windsor Locks in the 1940s and 50s without knowing Dr. Carneglia. He was everybody's doctor. He grew up in Windsor Locks and went to medical school at Harvard. He graduated in 1931 and returned to Windsor Locks to be the town doctor. After seeing patients all day in his office, his wife drove him around to make house calls in the evening. He was my grandparents doctor. He was my parents doctor, and my doctor. He set my broken arm, sewed up my chin, and got me through childhood diseases. His office and home was at 5 North Main St. He gave children a slip of paper that could be redeemed for an ice cream cone at Carroll's Drug store.

Dr. Carneglia spoiled us. He showed us what a family doctor could be. He was utterly selfless. No other doctor comes close to the standard that Dr. Carneglia set. He

also showed us, by example and not by words, that you can do well if you set high goals for yourself, and work hard to meet them.

Dr. Carneglia was the most well known and well respected citizen of Windsor Locks. He died in 1970.



The Rialto Theater

The Rialto Theater on Main St was the place for kids to go on Saturday afternoons for the Saturday Matinee. We saw the 1940s cowboy heroes such as Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry in the 1950s. We saw cartoons. There was a special thing that the Rialto Theater often did at the matinees. They gave you a ticket with a number between 1 and 10 when you purchased your admission ticket. Before the main feature, there was a short film which was a race of some sort. It was comical in nature, but serious business to the kids in the theater. If the horse, dog, car or human wearing the number on your ticket came in first in the race, you got a prize, which was popcorn or a drink.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The Windsor Locks Town Dump

It might seem strange to put the town dump on a list of things that many of us experienced as we grew up. Back then, we didn't have trash pickup at our homes, so we drove it to the dump, where it burned. You would see fires everywhere. You parked your car where you wanted (not over a section that that was burning), and you dumped your garbage. A dump like this would not be permitted to exist today. Back then, we thought it was normal. Besides dumping our trash there, male youths often used the dump for target practice. The dump had a good supply of rats. Below is a 1960 photo of the town dump which was then located on West Spring Street. If you didn't know this was a dump, you might think the photo had a certain beauty.



Windsor Locks Town Dump, West Spring St. 1960

Windsor Locks' Ethnic Markets

There were many ethnic markets in Windsor Locks back then.: Johnny Cappa's, Aldo's Oak Street Market, Preli's Market, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, and Sisitzky's Market. Let's take a quick look at each.

Johnny's Market, run by Johnny Cappa was on Chestnut St, near St. Mary's Church. It always had a bunch of bicycles parked in front of it. It was the place where all the kids went for penny candy. In front of the cash register there was an old time coke cooler with a lift-up lid. When you lifted the lid, you saw bottles of soda sitting neck-deep in very cold water. Above the water was a hose though which the water was pumped. To test his toughness, a boy would put his hand in the stream of water and see how long he could leave it there. Of course, Johnny didn't let it go on too long. He'd yell at us to close the lid. Below is a photo of Johnny's Market.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT

Aldo Sartirana ran the Oak Street Market, which was on Oak Street, just up from Main Street. Aldo's was the place where you went for a nice loaf of REAL Italian bread, and Italian cold-cuts. However it wasn't just Italians who went there. Here is a photo of the interior of Aldo's market, the formal name of which was the Oak St. Market. Like any good Italian market, Aldo's smelled good. It was a unique piece of Americana. Prior to being the Oak Street Market, it was owned by Joe Borracci, and was known as "Joe's". Aldo opened his market in the 1950s and it lasted until the Main Street re-development which razed all of the stores in the 1970s. He was in business for 22 years. He always had a couple of high school boys working there after school. They not only stocked shelves and worked the counters, but they did deliveries after school and on Saturdays. Chet Pohorylo and Jim Roche were two of those high schoolers, and both claim it was the best job they ever had.



Aldo's Market (Oak Street Market)

Bert's Market on North Street was a popular neighborhood market on North Street, near Suffield Street.



Bert's Market, North Street, near Suffield Street

Finally, there was the unforgettable bakery on Main St. in Windsor Locks. It was Barberi's "Home Style Bakery". That was the place to go for doughnuts, cakes, cookies and all sorts of baked goodies. It was a popular place for the kids to go for a treat. It was where you got birthday cakes. It was a place to go on Sunday after church.

Bartholomew Preli ran an Italian Market on lower Grove St, across from Blanche's Bowling Alley. He had excellent sausages as well as sliced processed meats and cheeses, and a vast assortment of Italian specialties.



Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Main St.

Sisitzky's Market on Main Street had exceptionally good meats. Markets such as these were the early convenience stores. See photograph below.



Sisitzky's Market, Main Street

Bradley Field

Bradley Field played a large role in our childhood in Windsor Locks. There was always a number of cars with parents and kids who visited the "old Bradley Field" for the thrill of watching the propellor planes take off and land. Many of us remember the old wooden buildings. The folks at Bradley Field were very nice to Boy Scouts. If you were doing your aviation merit badge, they would take you into the tower. They let me turn the lights on the runways late one afternoon. That was a thrill. Kids loved going into the terminal, and then out to the platform where you could stand outside and watch the planes come and go. Those were the days before high airport security.

If someone in the family was going to take an airplane trip in the late 1940s and early 50s, it was a BIG THING. No one took an airplane trip unless it was important. When a family member was going on a flight, family members got all dressed up and went to airport to wish them good luck. There were machines at the terminal into which you could insert quarters to buy insurance for the person who was going to take a flight. You couldn't let a relative take a flight without buying them some insurance. Looking back, that seems like a gruesome thought, but it seemed right at the time.

Bradley Field was not just a terminal where airplanes took off and landed. It was a high tech employment area. There was Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft, Pratt and Whitney and other prestigious companies. Fathers of friends worked there. That opened my eyes to the possibility of the aviation industry when I grew up. Eventually I spent a decade in the field of aviation and the rest of my career at NASA. There is no doubt that the aviation industry at Bradley Field helped push me in that direction. While at NASA, I worked with Hamilton Standard who built NASA's space suits.



Babb's Beach

Back in the 40s, 50s and 60s, air conditioning didn't exist. In the summer, the kids liked to get away from town, and go to a place to swim and cool off. Babb's Beach on Lake Congamond is only a few miles away in West Suffield. It was a place to swim, and it had a roller skating rink and there were dances. It was a popular place to go for the teenagers to go. Babb's was not new. It started in the 1890s. By the 1940s, it had big bands like Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. In the 1950s, the roller rink opened up, and it became a "cool" place to go. It was a favorite with the Windsor Locks crowd. It is now on the National Register of Historic places.



East Windsor Drive In

A big part of growing up in Windsor Locks was going to the Drive In movies. The East Windsor Drive in was just across the river. Prices were low. Families went there with their kids already in their pajamas. It was a popular place for teenagers to go on a date. The place had a park with swings for the kids to use before the show, and it had a refreshment stand. It was a quintessential old-fashioned Drive In. Research didn't turn up any photos of the East Windsor Drive In. However, it did produce an arial photo of the theater taken in 1962. Notice the area that looks like an amphitheater.



East Windsor Drive in - Arial View 1962

Railroad Salvage

Just as Dexter Plaza was one of the first Shopping Centers in the United States, Railroad Salvage was the first of the closeout stores in the Northeast, and one of the first in the nation. Now places like Job Lots and Odd Lots are everywhere. The Railroad Salvage store in East Windsor, was not far from the East Windsor Drive In, It was a place that Windsor Locks folks flocked to, to get bargains on everything from Hai Karate cologne to rugs, beds, outdoor furniture and CB Radios.

Ruby Vine, the man who founded Railroad Salvage was a World War II veteran, who lived in New Haven. In WWII, he was captured at the Battle of the Bulge, but he survived and returned to the US to become a first class entrepreneur. The TV commercials that he and his wife did were hilarious by today's standards. He was goofy and boisterous, edgy and cheesy, but it worked.

If you were among the many from Windsor Locks who frequented Railroad Salvage, you probably met and knew Ruby, Below is a photo of Ruby and his wife.



**Ruby Vine and his wife "Choo Choo"
in a Railroad Salvage commercial**

Following is a photo of the Railroad Salvage store. This photo may or may not be one of the store in East Windsor. In any case, this photo evokes the spirit of that store.



Railroad Salvage Store

Riverside Park

Growing up in Windsor Locks, we often left town for some excitement, not just to Babb's Beach, the East Windsor Drive in and Railroad Salvage, but also to RIVERSIDE PARK. Riverside Park was the only amusement park around. It had a speedway where we watched Jocko Maggiasco race. We roller skated, rode the bumper cars, the old wooden roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. We showed our strength by hitting a metal plate with a hammer, trying make the ball hit the bell, ate cotton candy and played the carnival games. It is fair to say that boys went there to meet girls and girls went there to meet boys. Going to Riverside Park wasn't something you did once a year. You went as often as you could. If you didn't have much money, and most of us didn't, you just went there to hang out with your friends and look for some excitement.



Riverside Park, Agawam, Mass.

Going out for Ice Cream

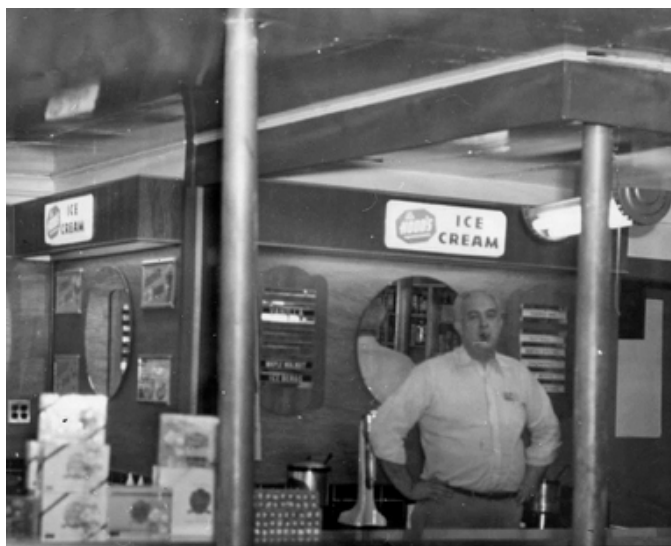
In the decades prior to air conditioning, going out for an ice cream in the summer was almost a necessity. It was something that we did a lot of in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. There were a number of places you could go for ice cream, but four were the most popular: Wuzzy's (Marconi Brothers Luncheonette), Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy in downtown Windsor Locks, and the Dairy Cream on Turnpike Road by Bradley Field. Each had its own niche. Wuzzy's was the teen-age hangout. It was popular. It was an institution that could not be duplicated. Tony's Soda Shoppe was a more traditional ice cream parlor. They didn't serve meals. Carroll's Pharmacy was primarily a pharmacy, but the kids at the time didn't seem to know that. It was where you went for an ice cream cone. The Dairy Cream introduced Windsor Locks to the wonders of soft serve ice cream. It is the only one of the four ice cream stores mentioned above which is still in existence in 2016. It has expanded and is flourishing. Here are photos of those four unforgettable ice cream stores.



**Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's".
A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .**



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950



James P. Carroll in his store. About 1955



Pizza and Grinders

Along with Ice Cream, growing up in Windsor Locks meant Pizza and Grinders. Windsor Locks has had a love affair with pizza and grinders since they were introduced to the town in the 1940s. Getting pizza for parties at home, or going out for a pizza was something we all did in Windsor Locks as we grew up in the 40s, 50s and 60s. The craze has not slowed down. The “Big Four” pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks were (and still are): AD’s, H&M, Second Poquonock and the Pizza Parlor. Back then, there were others such as Piccolos, Tanya’s, and Franks. We all had our favorites. The Big Four have expanded since they first opened, and all four are still going strong as of this writing in 2016. Here are photos of the Big Four pizza/grinder shops.



AD's original Pizza and Grinder shop on Main St.



Pizza Parlor Restaurant, 255 Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn - Since 1975



H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop - the original store - 1972



The “Box from the Locks”

Everyone who lived in Windsor Locks in the 1960s remembers a black hearse with the words “The Box from the Locks” painted on the side. It was the prized possession of Richard Quagliaroli. It was absolutely unique. Richie’s mother often gave him grief over his car, but he kept it for quite a while. Ritchie graduated from Windsor Locks High School in 1960. You could often see him on Main Street, or stopped in front of Marconi’s, or in Dexter Plaza with his friends, Harold Sutton and Tommy Taravella. The “Box from the Locks” was known from Hartford to Springfield. Below are photos of the hearse. Richie is in the first photo.



1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions

In 1965, Windsor Locks won the Little League World Championship. The team members were: Bruce Akerlind, Francis Aniello, Jr., Wayne Arent, Albert Barrett, Thomas Billick, William Boardman, Robert Creech, Jr., Philip Devlin, Edward Holmes, Russell Mattesen, Dale Misiek, Michael O'Connor, Robert O'Connor, Michael Roche, Stephen Scheerer, and Howard Tersavich Jr.

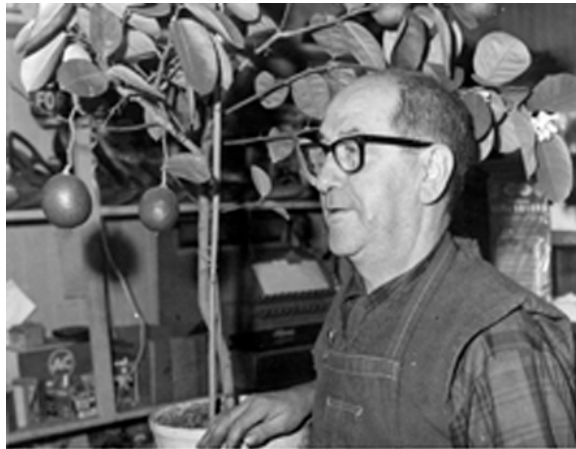
The 1965 championship used the single elimination technique. If a team lost a single game, they were out of the tournament. They had to win 13 games in a row to win the championship. Worldwide, there were 6,300 teams competing. The Windsor Locks team had two great pitchers, Bill Boardman and Mike Roche. who had a combined Earned Run Average of .5, which was phenomenal.



Windsor Locks 1965 Little League World Series Champions

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop

It has been said that the one place that shows up in most wedding photographs that were taken in Windsor Locks is Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop. Photos taken from the front of St. Mary's church of newlyweds leaving the church had Tony's place in the background. Everyone went to Tony's to get new soles, heels and other repairs. He opened his shoe repair shop at 29 Spring Street in 1929, and it remained open for 43 years, until he retired in 1972. Below is a photo of Tony in his shop.



Tony Basile

Blanche's Bowling Alley

Blanche Bianchi ran a small bowling alley on Grove St, just up from Main St. Bowling was very inexpensive. There were no automated pin-setters. Blanche had "pin boys" who set the pins for you. Unfortunately Blanche's bowling alley burned down on February 4, 1972. I could not find a photo of the bowling alley which was taken before the fire occurred. Here is one which was taken after the fire.



Blanche's Bowling Alley after the fire

The upper floor of this building used to be a movie theater. It was known as the Princess Theater and later as the Palace Theater. It operated as the Princess Theater

as early as 1914. No information could be found on when the names changed but we know that in 1929, this building, with the Palace Theater on the top floor, was sold and the new owner installed four bowling alleys on the ground floor.

Windsor Locks Centennial Celebration - 1954

The Enfield Falls Canal was finished in 1829. A new settlement formed near the locks of the canal, in the area called Pine Meadow. In 1854, it was incorporated as Windsor Locks. One hundred years later, Windsor Locks celebrated its Centennial. There were festivities, a Centennial Ball, an afternoon of sports contests, and a fishing derby. Below is a photo of Governor Lodge, Jane Pastamerlo, the Centennial Queen, and other dignitaries.



Gov. Lodge Howard White Windsor Locks
Jane Pastamerlo Loretta Rooney, Rev. Peck Centennial
Centennial Queen 1954

MAIN STREET

There is one single thing that everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 40s, 50s and 60s will carry with them forever. That is the memory of the old Main Street, as it existed before re-development in the late 1960s. It didn't matter whether you lived downtown, in the Southwest section or in the northern section of Windsor Locks, you spent an enormous amount of time on Main St. You went to Syd's Modern Drug, the Rialto, Wuzzy's, Bidwell's Hardware, the First National Bank, the First National Grocery Store, Bianchi's Restaurant, the A&P, AD's, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Swede's Jewelry store, the Donut Kettle, LaRussa's appliance store, Bianchi's Shoe store, the Post Office, the Library, and certainly the train station. Main Street is where we went to shop, to hang out, and to live the Windsor Locks life.

The sound of the train whistle, the hustle and bustle of a small town center They all are embedded in our memory forever. Main Street was the vital center of small

town life. It was a big part of growing up in Windsor Locks. Below are photos of Main St before and after the re-development of the 1970s. The difference is overwhelmingly obvious.



Main Street before and after redevelopment

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this article was to bring back those nostalgic memories of the town we grew up in, by describing the things we had in common while growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50, and 60s. These are the things that give us a special bond. We looked at 42 old photos and two newspaper clippings about the shared events of our youth. We took a brief historical trip through the time of our youth.

Chapter 2

Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks

The citizens of Windsor Locks have a long-standing love affair with ice cream. Ice cream stores have been a prominent fixture in Windsor Locks since before 1900. This article presents photographs and stories about the ice cream stores of Windsor Locks from about 1888 to the 1960s. It was the 1950s and 60s when two new trends started. One was that small, locally owned stores started to be replaced by stores of large chains such as Friendly's. The second was the introduction soft-serve ice cream, such as that served by the Dairy Cream on Ella Grasso Turnpike, across from Bradley Field.

The ice cream stores which are discussed in this article are:

- **Pasquale Colapietro's store**, in the Mather Block of Main St.
- **Dominick Alfano's store**, in the Barrett building on Main St., just south of Church St.
- **Leo Viola's store**, in the Barrett building on Main St., just south of Church St.
- **Vito Colapietro's store**, which at the Main St. level of Coly's Hotel
- **The Co-op Pharmacy**, Main St.
- **Carroll's Pharmacy**, on Suffield St
- **Marconi's Luncheonette (Wuzzy's)** on the corner of Spring St and Main St.
- **Tony's Soda Shoppe**. Vito Colapietro turned his store over to his son, Tony.
- **Dougherty's Drug Store** in Dexter Plaza
- **Friendly's** in Dexter Plaza
- **Dairy Cream** on Ella Grasso Turnpike, near Bradley Field

While ice cream could be purchased in other stores such as the A&P on Main St., this article focusses on the stores to which families, groups of friends, and individuals went to relax, have conversations, and enjoy an ice cream cone, an ice cream sundae or a milkshake.

Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream Store

Below is a 1906 photo of Pasquale Colapietro's store.

In that photo, Pasquale Colapietro, known as "Patsy Coly" is sitting down on the left. His daughter, Pasqualina, who was known as Esther, is by his side. It was common for Italian immigrants to Americanize their names because non-Italians found the Italian pronunciation to be difficult. Patsy's dog can be seen beside Esther. Patsy was the oldest of four Colapietro brothers. One of his brothers, Vito, who came to the US in 1905, is in the center of the picture, behind the dog. To the right of Vito is Patsy's wife, Grazia, who was called "Grace". On the right, behind the counter is another of the Colapietro brothers, Leo, who later moved to Springfield, Mass, and opened up the "Windsor Locks Grocery Store" on Main St. in Springfield.



Pasquale Colapietro's store, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn. about 1906.
Pasquale (seated), daughter, Pasqualina, Vito Colapietro,
Grazia (Patsy's wife), Leo Colapietro behind the counter.

The 1913 "Aero view" map of Windsor Locks indicates that Patsy's store was on the Mather Block, which was the block of Main St between Spring Street and Church Street. Information on that map shows that Patsy's store also sold fruit, cigars, tobacco, groceries, confectionary, post cards, and toys, and imported olive oil.

It was the custom of the time for the first Italian sibling who moved to the US to help his other siblings to come to this country, and to help further when they arrived. All three of Patsy's brothers came to the US. Here is a photo of the four Colapietro brothers. Only one, Giovanni, returned to live in Italy.



*The Colapietro Brothers
Vito, Giovanni, Leonardo and Pasquale*

Dominick Alfano's Ice Cream Store

This is a photograph of a very early ice cream store in Windsor Locks. You can easily read the name of the store in the window "Dominick Alfano Co." on the front window. Under that are the words "Ice Cream" and "Soda" in large, bold, fancy letters. On each of the left side windows is the word "MOXIE". This store is in the Barrett Building on the corner of Main St. and State St., across Main Street from the bridge to Warehouse Point. If you expand this photo on a computer screen, you will see the word "Grocery" appear on the scalloped awning on the front window.



Dominick Alfano Co. Ice cream shop, in the Barrett Building, Corner of Main St and State St., just south of Church St.

So when did this store exist? Look at the next photo, which came from the Windsor Locks Historical Society's website. Both stores are on the same corner of the Barrett Building. The store has the same Moxie signs on the left window, the same slanted corner wall where the door is, and a scalloped front window shade. Underneath that photo on the Windsor Locks Historical Society website, it says: "The Windsor Locks Journal, June 8, 1888". Now we know that Alfano's store existed in 1888.



The Windsor Locks Journal
June 8, 1888

Leo Viola's Ice Cream Store

Below is a 1913 photo of Leo Viola's Ice Cream Store.



Main Street, Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1913

By looking at the three previous photos, you will see that this store is in the same location (The Barrett Building) as Dominick Alfano's store. You can't read the lettering on the scalloped awning on the front window in the above photo. Below is an expanded view the section of this photo which has the front window awning. You can clearly see that this is store of Mr. Leo Viola. The 1913 Aero View Map of Windsor Locks lists Leo Viola's store and says that it also sold confectionery, cigars, olive oils, etc. Now we have two pieces of information saying that Leo Viola's store existed in 1913. It is the same store, but under new management.



Image expanded and enhanced to show the name
"Leo Viola" on the awning of the store

Leo Viola store also sold plates with a calendar and a decorative painting of fruit. The plate below has a 1929 Calendar on it, so we know that Leo Viola's store, which had been in operation in 1913, was still in business in 1929.



Advertising plate for Leo Viola's store
with fruit painting and 1929 calendar.
Store was in Barrett Bldg., Main St. Windsor Locks, CT

Vito Colapietro's Ice Cream Store

Earlier in this article, you saw a photo of Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream Store. Pasquale's younger brother, Vito was in that shop. Vito worked for his brother when he first came over from Turi, Italy. Turi is a tiny town, south of Bari, Italy. The patron saint of Turi is St. Oronzo. Everyone from Windsor Locks knows the name "St. Oronzo." Besides working for his brother, Pasquale, Vito also worked on the bridge to Warehouse Point. Around 1917, he purchased the Byrnes Hotel on Main Street, across from the Train Station. It became known as the Windsor Locks Hotel, and later as Coly's Hotel. On the street level of the hotel, there were three stores. Vito rented out two of them, and used the one on the corner of the Hotel next to the driveway, as an Ice Cream Store. Below is a photo of Vito Colapietro in his store in 1917. Notice that while this store was a bit larger, it is not all that different from Pasquale's store. It had an ice cream and soda counter on one side and a counter on the other side for selling tobacco products, magazines, candy, post cards, etc. The sign on the right lists the following drinks: grape juice, orangeade, root beer, milk shakes, malted milk. The bottles on the shelf on the right are the syrups that he used. The Coca Cola lamp has a cut glass lamp lampshade that would be worth a small fortune today. The counter was marble.



Vito Colapietro's Candy Store 1917

Vito Colapietro had the following photo “Retouched” for purposes of advertising. It was taken in 1927. You can see Vito in front of his store, wearing a white apron. The man standing next to him was Michael J. Fitzpatrick. The boy with them was Vito’s son, John. Notice the other two stores on the street level of the hotel. The one next to Vito’s store was “The Boston Store”. The one to the left of that was the “Windsor Locks New Market”. In the photos of the Dominick Alfano and the Leo Viola stores, you saw the same style of awning over the front window.



*1927 photo of Coly's Hotel "retouched" for advertising.
Michael J. Fitzpatrick, Vito and John J. Colapietro standing*

Vito’s Ice Cream Store went through a number of transformations between 1917 and the redevelopment of Main St., but it always had that same style awning. I remember getting out the long metal rod that was used to roll the awning up and down

and operating it often. Later, those other two stores became a shoe store which was run by Mondo Bianchi, and Bill Armstead's Package Store. Back then, liquor stores were known as Package Stores.

The following photo is of Vito's store in 1932. Vito, as always, was wearing a white apron. Next to him are Moses Goldfarb and Vito's son, Leo. Later in life, Leo became a Navy pilot, and was given the nickname "Pete," which stuck with him to the present day. That nickname came from the fact that his Navy buddies couldn't pronounce his last name "Colapietro". The correct pronunciation is "Co la p yet tro". They had trouble with the "p yet" part, so they simplified it to "Pete". When they pronounced his last name, it was "Cola pete tro". Many still use this Americanized pronunciation. Moses Goldfarb ran a rooming house on the upper floors of the building that you seen on the right of the photo.



*Vito Colapietro, Moses Goldfarb, Leo,
in front of Coly's hotel 1932*

By 1933, the Ice Cream Store was transformed into a "beer tavern," as you can see in the following photo. Notice the sign in the right of the photo which said that Vito was not allowed to sell alcoholic beverages other than beer.

The bar was made of two inch thick cherry. The bar was removed later, when he turned the store back to an Ice Cream Store. The bar was removed and stored in a barn behind the hotel. When I started to build a Soap Box Derby car, Vito's son, my Uncle John, remembered the two inch thick cherry bar that had been stored in the barn for decades, and brought it down for me to use as the floorboard of the car.

Below is a photo of me in that Soap Box Derby car, whose floorboard was once Vito's bar top. My brother, Lenny, is in the truck behind me. My car was sponsored by C.H.Dexter & Sons, Inc, which is where my dad worked. They let my dad use their pickup truck to drive my car to the Soap Box Derby track in East Hartford. I built this car in the basement of my dentist, Dr. Sullivan, on the corner Spring St and Center St. He had an excellent woodworking and metalworking shop in his basement, and he was very generous with his time in helping me build that car.



Vito Colapietro's Beer Tavern 1933



Mel Montemerlo in Soap Box Derby Car.
His brother Lenny in the truck. About 1955.

Co-Op Pharmacy (and ice cream store)

Below is a photo of the Co-Op Pharmacy, which was on Main St in Windsor Locks in 1930. James P. Carroll Jr. and Art Logan worked there part time. Art left to join his brothers in the plumbing business. You can see the Ice cream and soda fountain counter and stools on the right.



Co-Op Pharmacy, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., 1930
Art Logan (left) and Jim Carroll Jr. (right) worked there part-time.

Carroll's Pharmacy (which housed a great ice cream store)

James P. Carroll Jr. opened Carroll's Pharmacy in 1945. Unlike the Italians we have just been discussing, who came over around 1900, his ancestor, Richard Carroll, arrived in the US in 1861. By the time James P. Carroll his Pharmacy on Suffield St. in 1945, his family had deep roots here. Charles Carroll, son of James P. Carroll Jr. provided the photo of the Co Op pharmacy and the following photos of Carroll's pharmacy, as well as the information about them.

Below are four photographs of Carroll's Pharmacy around 1955. The captions on the photos provide the names of the people in the photos.



James P. Carroll in his store. About 1955



Jim Carroll, in front of Carroll's Pharmacy. Since Jim was also the Fire Chief, he had a store window dedicated to Fire Prevention Week.



Charles Carroll between his grandfather, James P. Carroll Sr. (left) and his father, James P. Carroll, Jr (right), in Carroll's Pharmacy. Circa 1955



James P. Carroll Jr and Louise Naie in Carroll's Pharmacy

Dr. Ettore Carneglia, who seemed to be everyone's physician in Windsor Locks, used to give his young patients vouchers that could be redeemed for an ice cream cone at Carroll's. Charles Carroll said that in the days of Carroll's Pharmacy, many prescriptions were compounded by hand, and the capsules were filled by hand. He also said that the Pharmacy was on the ground level, and his family lived above the Pharmacy. They built a Cape Cod style house next to the Pharmacy and moved into it in 1963 when the Pharmacy closed. The photos and stories that Charles provided bring back pleasant memories of Carroll's Pharmacy.

Marconi's Luncheonette (affectionately known as Wuzzy's)

Marconi's Luncheonette was on the corner of Spring St and Main St. until the reconstruction of Main St. It was a lot of things to a lot of people. Teenagers will remember it as a hangout. There were booths in the back which were great for hanging out. There was a time when Ella Grasso, who later became the Governor of Connecticut, had breakfast at Marconi's often. The singer, Gene Pitney, went to Marconi's a number of times, always without advance warning. The popular radio announcers, Bob Steele and Brad Davis would visit Marconi's and mention it on the air.

Folks from Windsor Locks remember the booths in the back, the pinball machine, the Cherry Cokes, the homemade meatballs and tomato sauce, the burgers and fries, home fries, sausage grinders, and the list goes on. They also made a chopped pickle and bologna sandwich.

The Marconi brothers were Johnny, Louis and Angelo, who was called "Wuzzy". There is a story about how he got his nickname. The story is: Angelo was supposed to serve Mass one Sunday but he didn't show up. Fr. Grady asked his friends "Angelo wasn't sick, **was he**? The "was he" sounded like Wuzzy, and ever since, Angelo was known as Wuzzy. Is the story true? Who knows? Back then people didn't have cell phones which could record video of everything. See photo below.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's". A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .

Some people still remember that guitar lessons were given in the floor above Marconi's. Some remember their parents telling them that they couldn't go to Marconi's. Some remember playing "church hooky," and going to Marconi's instead of St. Mary's on Sunday morning. A Saturday night ritual was to stand in front of Marconi's and watch the cars and girls go by, before heading out to Riverside Park. Some who worked as paper boys remember going to Marconi's the day they got paid, and spending too much money on the pinball machine. All of the Marconi brothers had been alter boys at St. Mary's. Marconi's luncheonette was unforgettable.

Tony's Soda Shoppe

In about 1950, Vito Colapietro's son, Tony, took over the ice cream store, and it became known as Tony's Soda Shoppe. Below is a photo of Tony in his store, on opening day. The store was completely remodeled. Notice the newer style stools at the counter. Notice the cigar and cigarette counter on the right. I remember cigarettes selling for as low as 15 cents per pack, but that might have been back when Vito Colapietro ran the store.

The store was decorated for its grand opening as Tony's Soda Shoppe. You can see the vase of flowers on the counter on the right. I remember asking why "shoppe" was spelled "Shoppe". I also remember not understanding the answer. Uncle Tony let me help take care of customers on that opening day.



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950

The fact that his son, Tony, was managing the store didn't stop Vito from working there every day. Here is Vito in the store in 1950.



Vito Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950

In the above photo, Vito is at the counter which was toward the back of the store. You can see the stool of the Ice Cream counter at the right of the photo, From the 1950 opening of Tony's Soda Shop until it was closed for the redevelopment of Main St, the store didn't change much. Vito continued to run the hotel from the Ice Cream Store. That's where people paid their hotel bills and where all hotel business was conducted.

Dougherty's Drug Store and Friendly's

In the 1960s and 70s, there were two other ice cream stores on Windsor Locks's Main St. They were in Dexter's Plaza. Dougherty's Drug Store had a classic Ice Cream Store counter. It served everything you would expect from an Ice Cream Store, and it had a lunch menu too. I worked there in the summer of 1962. It was a good experience. I already knew how to make the ice cream dishes. The really interesting thing was learning how to be a short order cook. It was a great summer job.

Just a few doors down from Dougherty's Drug was the new Friendly's. It was much like all the other Friendly's stores in the US. It was a fun place to go. It signaled a change. It signaled the introduction of large chains of ice cream stores. I couldn't find any photos of Dougherty's Drugs or of Friendly's. Here is a photo of Dexter Plaza, where they were located.

Dougherty Drug Store was in the corner at the end of the road that you are looking down. It was to the right of Grant's. Friendly's was also to the right of the road, but closer to the cars are parked on the right.



Dexter Plaza, 1965

DAIRY CREAM (on Ella Grasso Turnpike near Bradley Field)

The Dairy Cream on Ella Grasso Turnpike near Bradley Field was a big step in the parade of ice cream stores in Windsor Locks. It was founded in 1954. It was the first of the soft-serve ice cream stores in Windsor Locks. It quickly became very popular. There were days and evenings when the parking lot was full and the lines were long. It was, in the tradition of ice cream shops such as "Wuzzy's" (Marconi's Luncheonette), a gathering place for family and friends. It

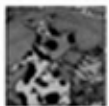
was a hangout, but in a different sense. People hung out in their cars and in the beds of their pickup trucks in the parking lot instead of in the booths or on stools at an ice cream counter. It was the first place I remember seeing people in the beds of pickup trucks, leisurely enjoying an ice cream treat. It was a place where folks with antique cars met to show off their cars. It is the longest lasting ice cream shop in Windsor Locks. 1954 to the present day (2017) is a half century. Here are five photos of this great Windsor Locks ice cream institution.



Antique Cars in parking lot of Windsor Locks Dairy Cream



Bradley Field Dairy Queen at night



Dairy Cream at Bradley International

1954 • 🕒 • 🌐



Opened in 1954

1954

CONCLUSION

Why would anyone bother to write a history of the ice cream shops of a small town like Windsor Locks? Well, if you ask such a question, you are probably not from Windsor Locks. I know from my grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, that ice cream stores were a big part of Windsor Locks culture in the early to mid 1900s. I lived in Windsor Locks from the early 1940s to 1960, and knew Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy, Marconi's Luncheonette (Wuzzy's), Friendly's and the Dairy Cream very well, and I worked at Dougherty's Drug Store's ice cream counter for a summer. All the kids that I knew loved to go out for ice cream. Going out for ice cream in Windsor Locks is a longstanding tradition. It was and is a popular thing for families, friends and for groups of kids to do. Of course, it is a great place to go on a date.

My grandfather, Vito Colapietro, had the ice cream store on the Main Street level of Coly's hotel, and I visited my grandparents at their apartment in the hotel at least two days a week. I was in the ice cream store every day I visited my grandparents. My grandfather taught me how to play the pinball machine in his store before I was three years old. He would lift me up onto the top of a wooden soda box in front of the pin ball machine. He showed me how to use "body English" on the machine; that is, to hit the machine with my body to make the ball go where I wanted it to, but without pushing it so hard that I would "tilt" the machine. He taught me how to make ice cream cones, ice cream sundaes, milk shakes, and banana splits. He showed me how to get the partially frozen gallon of "Lemon Blend" out of the freezer and use an ice pick to loosen it up, and pour a glass for a customer. He taught me how to roll the awning outside the store up and down, and how to stock the shelves in the candy section. You can see why I have such an interest in the Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks.

I went to St Mary's Elementary School. One day, something that my grandfather taught me, got me in trouble in math class. The Sister was teaching us fractions. She gave us a worksheet with drawings of fruit and other foods and told us to draw a line on each which cut it in half. Everybody was expected to get 100% on this simple test. I believe I was the only one to disappoint the nice Sister. When it came to the banana, I drew a line across the banana the long way. I remember distinctly that the Sister reprimanded me in front of the entire class, saying: "Why would anyone ever cut a banana the long way? Everyone cuts a banana in half by slicing it across middle (the short way)". I was flabbergasted and astounded. I remember responding, "Well Sister, I guess you have never made a Banana Split." She was very unhappy with my response. I told my mother about this when I got home from school. My mother reprimanded me for being disrespectful to a Nun. All of this was because of ice cream.

Chapter 3

Earliest Pizza & Grinder Shops of Windsor Locks

This article presents a history of the earliest pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks. When did the first ones open? Who were the early entrepreneurs in this business? How did these businesses change? Anyone who has lived in Windsor Locks knows of the popularity of pizza and grinders in their town. Now it is time to take a look at how it all started. But first, let's take a brief look at just where pizza and grinders started.

The word "pizza" was first documented in the year 997AD in Gaeta, Italy, and it probably has its roots in the Italian flatbread known as foccacia, which was and is often topped with foods and sauce. However, pizza is not only an Italian thing. The ancient Greeks had a flatbread called "plakous" which was flavored with herbs, onion and garlic. In the sixth century BC, the soldiers of Persian King Darius baked flatbread covered with cheese and dates on top of their battle shields. It was, however, the Italians who brought pizza, as we know it, to America when so many Italians immigrated to the US between 1890 and 1930. (Wikipedia article on pizza)

The giant sandwich that folks from Windsor Locks call a "grinder" is also an international phenomenon. In the US, the grinder is also referred to as a: submarine, hero, hoagie, Dagwood, and a Po' Boy, but in Windsor Locks, it is a "grinder". Internationally there are the Mexican cemitas, the Cuban "Cuban", the Chilean chacarero, the Vietnamese Banh mi, the Indian vada pav, the Japanese Katsu sando, the Chinese Rou jia mo, the English Butty, the Greek gyro, the Danish Smorrebrod, the Polish zapiekanka, the Israeli sabich, the South African gatsby, and the Australian Vegemite sandwich. The world has been eating grinders for centuries. (from menuism.com)

Now let's take a look at the earliest pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks.

Frank's Restaurant

One of the earliest places in Windsor Locks to serve grinders was named "Frank's Restaurant". Frank's was an informal hamburger and hot dog shop on the corner of Elm St and Route 75. It was owned by owned and operated by Frank E. Hancock Sr and his brother Albert from the early 1950s to the mid 1960s. They stopped putting ads in the Yellow Pages somewhere between 1973 and 1978. Below is a photo of Frank's that was taken sometime in the 1950s. The photo was made available by the Hancock family.

According to Albert Hancock's obituary in the Hartford Courant, Albert also owned the Dairy Cream on Turnpike Road since 1955. Albert later went on to be a food inspector for the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection for 22 years.



***"Frank's" served hamburgs, hot dogs and grinders 1950s
Elm St. & Route 75, Owned by Frank E. Hancock Sr.***

Below is a photo of Frank's Diner during the 1979 Tornado. It was destroyed that day, and it never reopened.



Frank's Diner during 1979 Tornado

Teddy's Restaurant

Teddy's Restaurant at 220 Main St, had the following ad in the 1957 Yellow Pages. According to the ad below, Charles Smith was the "Host". They served sandwiches and grinders "of excellence". It was one of the earliest real Grinder Shops in Windsor Locks. We don't know when Teddy's was founded, but we know it was in existence in 1957, and that it specialized in Grinders. It didn't show up in any of the later Windsor Locks phonebook's that I found. It may have been short-lived, or it may have opened long before 1957.

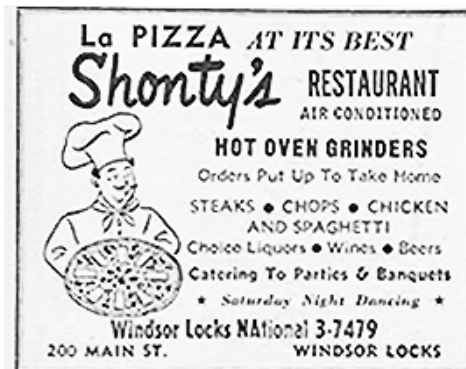


Shonty's Restaurant

Shonty's Restaurant was located at 200 Main St., next to Bianchi's Restaurant. While it was a full service restaurant with steaks, chops and chicken, it also served pizza. Interestingly enough, they called it "LaPizza". The earliest Windsor Locks Yellow Pages I could find was 1957. There was a Shonty's ad in it. Shonty also had ads in the 1967 Yellow Pages. It closed in 1969 during the redevelopment of Main St.

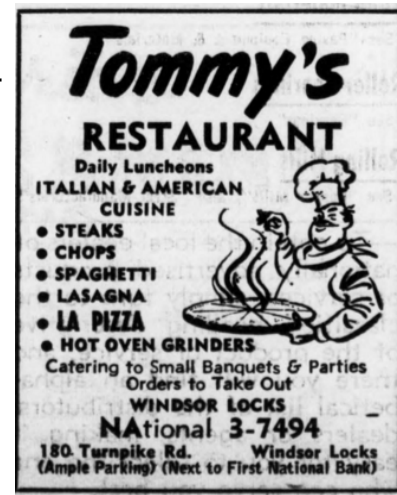


From right to left: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Coly's Hotel.
At right is corner of Grove St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn



Tommy's Restaurant

Tommy's restaurant, which was at 180 Turnpike Rd, had an ad which said "Italian and American Cuisine - Steaks, Chops, Spaghetti, Lasagna, LaPizza". Both Shonty's and Tommy's referred to pizza as "LaPizza". Tommy's had an ad in the 1956 Yellow Pages and had them as late as 1967. Tommy's was on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Highway), not far from Tony's Pizza Palace, Tanya's Pizza Palace and Piccolo's Pizza.



The Bridge View Restaurant

The **Bridge View Restaurant**, at 68 Main St, across from the bridge to Warehouse Point, had the following ad in the 1957 Yellow Pages. They specialized in Italian-American home cooking and grinders to take out, as can be seen in the following 1972 Yellow Pages ad. The Bridge View Restaurant has been around for a long time. I haven't been able to determine the year of its founding. Below is another photo of the Bridge View Restaurant during the 1936 flood.



Main St. Windsor Locks during 1936 Flood. Above the left side of the bridge, you can see a "RESTAURANT" sign. That is the Bridge View Restaurant.



Here are two photos of the Bridge View Restaurant before and after remodeling in 1955.



Bridge View Restaurant (toward left, with striped awning)
Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn.



Bridge View Restaurant after 1955 remodeling

AD'S Pizzeria Restaurant

Giuseppe Albano and John DeLeo opened AD's Pastry Shop on Main St. in 1958. Below is a photo of that shop. Their last initials (Albano and DeLeo) provided the name "AD's". They sold pastry, but they featured pizza and grinders, as you can see in the sign in the photo below the word "Pepsi". The Main St. location only seated about eight customers. Its popularity grew.

In 1995, they opened a much larger restaurant on Center Street, near Rt. I-91. While the giant pizzas and grinders are still their featured items, AD's developed a wider menu of Italian specialties. They have a lunch and a dinner menu with a wide variety of Italian specialties. Their new name is "AD's Pizzeria Restaurant".

Below are photos of the new AD's Pizzeria Restaurant, and of its interior.



AD's Pastry Shop, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn. 1958



In 1995, AD's moved to its new location at 377 S. Center St.



AD's Pizzeria Restaurant on Game Day

After John DeLeo passed away, the job of running the shop went to his wife, Anna, and their two children, Joe and Alfie. The restaurant adopted another feature. It also added a sports bar, with a big emphasis on the Pittsburgh Steelers, although Alfie sometimes wears a Cowboy's jersey on game day. You can see the Pittsburgh Steelers fan club in above photo of the interior of the restaurant. AD's reviews on various restaurant rating websites indicate the place is well liked. They have some customers who have been regulars for more than 20 years.

Susan Famiglietti of Windsor Locks remembered that AD's pizzeria was at the end of a little strip mall on South Center Street for years right next to their current building.

Karen Pappa said: "I worked at AD's in the late 1960's and 70's. The original owners were Giovianni and his daughter Joanne Albano, the DeLeos only worked part time back then. Joanne and her younger sister, Francis, worked there back then. Anna was a young mother and only came in once in a while. John was a barber full-time, and only worked there part-time. When Joanne and Francis went back to Italy with their husbands, the DeLeos took over full time."

Tony's Pizza Palace

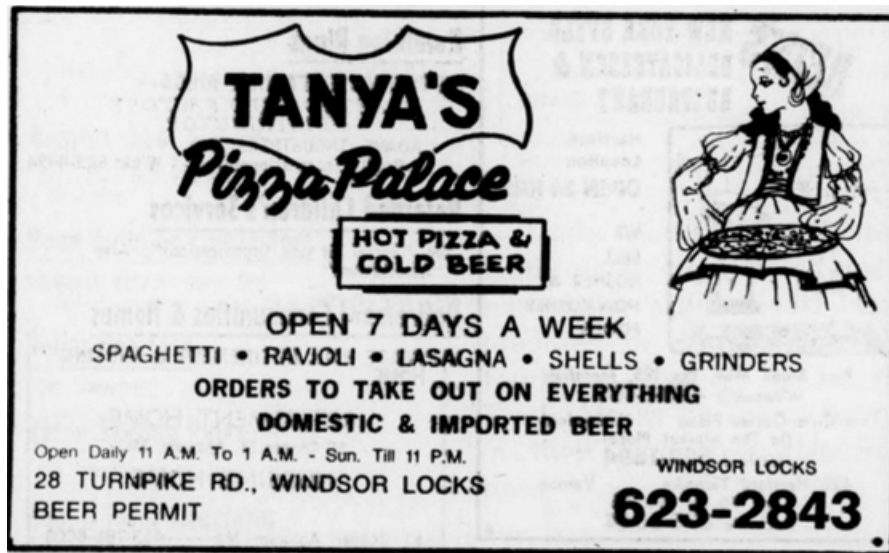
Tony's Pizza Palace had the following ad in the Windsor Locks Yellow Pages in 1970. I have not been able to find any other references to Tony's Pizza Palace on the internet or from contacts in Windsor Locks. From the ad, you can see that they also had Italian specialties such as spaghetti, ravioli, lasagna and shells. Tony's Pizza Palace was at 173 Turnpike Road, between Tanya's Pizza Palace and Piccolo's Pizza, which are discussed later in this chapter. All three of these Pizza shops were near where the Double Tree Inn is now.



Tanya's Pizza Palace

Now, in 2016, many Windsor Locks residents remember Tanya's Pizza Palace fondly. As with Piccolo's, photos of the store could not be found. Below is an ad from

the 1972 Yellow Pages. Tanya's was near Piccolo's, which is on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Turnpike) , where the Double Tree hotel is now. Robert Butryman, of Windsor Locks, said that he loved Tanya's Pizza. Tanya's Pizza Palace located near Piccolo's Pizza and Tony's Pizza Palace.



Piccolo Pizza

Piccolo's used their own methods to make grinders. Kathy Case-Driscoll of Windsor Locks remembers that they hollowed out the bread in order to put the meatballs in. Piccolos was near Tanya's Pizza Palace, where the Double Tree hotel is now (2016). You are probably getting the idea by now that there were a number of pizza places in close proximity.

The first Yellow Pages ad below I could find for Piccolo was in 1972. There was another of their Yellow Pages ads in 1978. Piccolo's probably began in the early 1970s. It was still in business in 1978, but I could find no information as to when it closed.



On April 14, 2008, BusinessWest.com did an article on Domenico Piccolo and his son, Guy. It said that in the early 1970, Domenico Piccolo , a "long-time owner of

Piccolo's Pizza in Windsor Locks" bought a lot of land near Bradley Field, in hopes of relocating his restaurant and lowering overhead. This gives a hint that in the early 1970s, Piccolo Pizza had already been around for a while. The article goes on to say that the land he bought was never used for relocating the restaurant, but rather was used for the airport parking venture that his son, Guy, started and built. That investment did well.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that the owner of Piccolo's would get a couple guys to lift her Dad in his wheelchair up the steps so they could dine in, and he always gave them quarters for the pinball machine!

H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop

The Hartford Courant of Jan. 7, 2002 had an excellent article on the H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop, and its owner, Mahmoud (Moe) Hussein. Moe and his father-in-law opened his original shop in 1972 in a rented storefront on Spring Street. It was a classic pizza and grinder shop. It was a small and unassuming building, but the pizzas and the grinders were very large and very good. The first time I went there, I got a pastrami grinder that could have fed three hungry men. I was hooked. Below is a photo of the original H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop.



H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop - the original store - 1972

In 2003, Moe moved his business to a larger lot beside his original store. The new store has room for about 50 customers. He bought that lot in about 1980, with the intention of expanding his business. He was thinking ahead. From the start, it was a family business, with the whole family pitching in. Moe, who grew up in Jerusalem, immigrated to Connecticut when he was 17. He wears a constant smile.

The new store has an expanded menu. In addition to the giant pizzas and grinders, Moe serves a number of Italian-style meals and salads. H&M doesn't disappoint. The next two photos show the exterior and the interior of the new store.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembers that Windsor Locks Little League teams often celebrated the end of a season with a Party Pizza from H&M. She said that one ham grinder could feed you for a week.



The new H&M Pizzeria and Giant Grinder shop - 2003
490 Spring St., Windsor Locks, Conn.



Interior of the new H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder shop

The Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop

Fazza Saleh opened a pizzeria in Poquonock in 1969, after he get back from his military service in Vietnam. In 1975, he opened the Second Poquonock Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop at 75 Old County Road in Windsor Locks. It was and remains a

family operation. The pizzas that you get at the Second Poquonock Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop are big and thick. Their Party Pizza was one of the largest pizzas I had ever seen. Their grinders are enormous, as you can see in the photo below. The food from Second Poquonock is always a party favorite. It is rare that anyone is surprised by the name of a pizza shop, but “Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop” gets your attention. If you go to Second Poquonock during lunch, you can find a long line. It’s a great place to stop in for just a slice and a coke, as well as to get ready for a party.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that Fazza was well known for making wonderful fried dough at the annual Fireman's carnival.



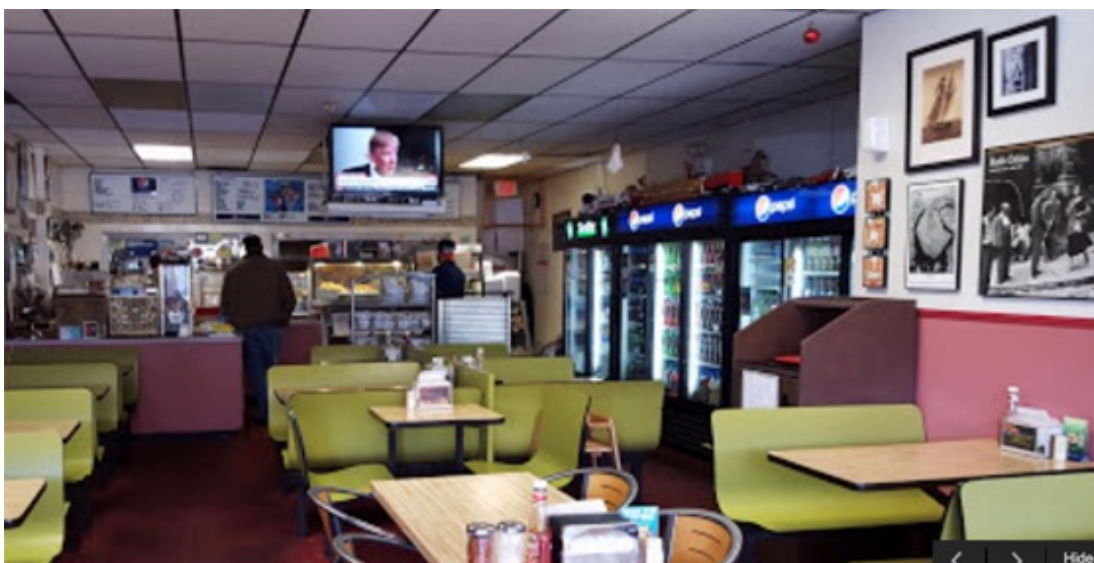
Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop
75 Old County Road, Windsor Locks, Conn



Second Poquonock's Giant Italian Grinder

The Pizza Parlor Restaurant

Gus Kostantakis opened the Pizza Parlor Restaurant back in 1975. It is at 225 Main St. in the little shopping center, across from where the old Post Office used to be.



Interior of Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that the Pizza Parlor was once located across the street for many years, and was owned by someone else before Gus. Lynne LaChance Solak remembered that the previous owners were George and Kaye Bonatsakis. That would make it one of the earliest pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks. Kelly also remembered that Gus would also let local teenagers fold boxes in exchange for a soda and chips.

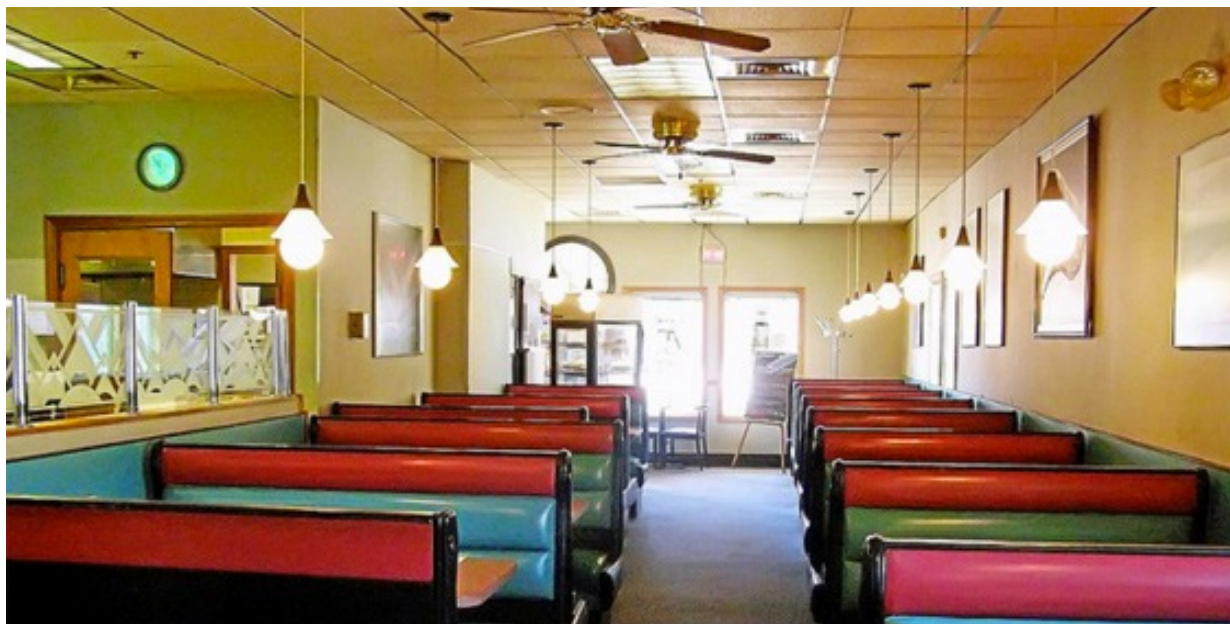


The Pizza Parlor Restaurant is not just a pizza shop. It is a full-service, full-menu restaurant with daily specials. The pizzas are excellent. If you check the websites such as Trip Advisor, and you find that the Pizza Parlor gets excellent reviews. As with the other pizza places in Windsor Locks, low prices and good food are the reasons for its longevity. It's a nice place to go for a family gathering or with a group of friends. They can easily handle groups of 15 with only a days notice. Here is an ad taken from a

Windsor Locks phone directory of the 1970s. Below are an ad for the Pizza Parlor from the 1978 Yellow Pages, and photographs of the exterior and interior of the store.



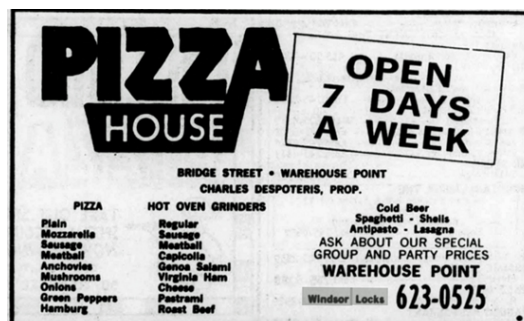
Pizza Parlor Restaurant, 255 Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn - Since 1975



Interior of the Pizza Parlor Restaurant

Pizza House (Warehouse Point)

While this article is on the early Pizza and Grinder shops of Windsor Locks, it is appropriate to mention the Pizza House, which is located just across the river, in Warehouse Point. It used to be where the Main Fish Market now is, and it was owned and operated by the father of the family who now runs the Fish Market. The ad below is from the Windsor Locks Yellow Pages of 1972.



Years in which ads for stores appeared in Yellow Pages

To get a better idea of when the Pizza and Grinder shops were in business, I found some Windsor Locks telephone books, and checked to see if the stores had advertisements in the Yellow Pages. I was only able to locate phone books for six years: 1956, 1957, 1967, 1970, 1973 and 1978. While it would have been better to have the Windsor Locks phone books for every year from 1950 to the present day, the five years that I found cover the range of years in which the early pizza and grinder shops opened.

The following spreadsheet shows the years that each of the Pizza and Grinder shops of Windsor Locks had ads in the six Windsor Locks Yellow Pages that I had access to.

Since all pizza and grinder shops depend heavily on their carry-out business, we can feel confident that this spreadsheet which shows when they were running ads in the Yellow Pages is accurate. Obviously, it would be more precise if we had the Yellow Pages for all years, but that was not possible.

	1956	1957	1967	1970	1973	1978
Frank's	X	X	X	X	X	
Tommy's	X	X	X			
Shonty's	X	X	X			
Bridge View	X	X	X	X	X	
Teddy's		X	X			
AD's			X	X	X	X
Tony's				X		
Piccolo's				X	X	X
Pizza House				X	X	X
Tanya's					X	X
H&M						X
2nd Poquonock						X
Pizza Parlor						X

Conclusion

As we have seen, the first pizza and grinder shops came to Windsor Locks in the 1950s. At first, you could get pizza and grinders at full-service restaurants. Then came the specialty shops which focussed on pizza and grinders. Some of the early pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks lasted a long time. AD's, the Second Poquonock, H&M, and the Pizza Parlor are all still going strong as of this writing in 2016. AD's and H&M replaced their initial shops with larger quarters and expanded menus.

The citizens of Windsor Locks have had a long love affair with Pizza and Grinder shops. Why not? They are comfort foods that can be enjoyed out or at home without having to dress up to go out. The service at these locally owned, locally operated shops can't be beat, and the prices are very reasonable.

There were two "centers" of the pizza and grinder business in Windsor Locks. One was Main Street. The other was Turnpike Road, also known as Route 75 and the Ella Grasso Turnpike. Main St. had AD's original store, Shonty's, Teddy's, the Bridge View Restaurant and the Pizza Parlor. Turnpike Road had Tonya's, Piccolo's, Tommy's, Tony's, and Frank's. Of course, in between Main St. and Turnpike Rd, there are three heavy hitters in the pizza and grinder trade: AD's, H&M, and Second Poquonock.

In the Introduction, we saw that pizza and grinders is not just Italian foods. They are international phenomena. As we looked at the pizza shops of Windsor Locks, we see that the pizza and grinder entrepreneurs were ethnically diverse, which is as it should be. Windsor Locks is a town of immigrants, and it was some of those immigrants and their families who built and operated our pizza and grinder shops.

Ideas for this article were actively discussed on Facebook's private group page named "You know you're from Windsor Locks when". A number of the people from that group provided information, photos, and suggestions for this chapter. They are: Kat Arbacheski, Lisa Bellinger, Robert Butryman, Lisa Mund Calsetta, Kathy Case-Driscoll, Carol Gagnon, Justine Gamache, Judy Greene Cyr, Shirley Diane, Mickey Danyluk, Kathy Case-Driscoll, Lori DeLuco Deleel, Susan Famiglietti, Larry Ferrari, Alyson Gray, Harvey Jacobson, Rose Anderson Johnson, Celeste Gail Jordan, Joseph McGloin, Gerry Morel, Lee Valbona Moule, Bob Rossi, Karen Pappa, Kimberly Avery Pease, Michael Persuitte, Debbie Hinkley Pham, Donna M. Phillips, Chet Pohorylo, Jim Roche, Mary-Sue Ruitter, Kelly Savery, Carol Schwarz, Lynn LaChance Solak, Nancy Rosa Willard, and Lee Ruggiero Zononi.

Chapter 4

Johnny Cappa and “Johnny’s Market”

Kids growing up in downtown Windsor Locks in the 1950s, 60s and early 1970s knew Johnny Cappa and frequented “Johnny’s Market” on Chestnut St., across from St. Mary’s Church. “Johnny’s” was a place where you could get the normal things you would get in a small market, but it was far more than that. Every time you passed Johnny’s, you saw a number of bicycles lying on the sidewalk in front of his shop. It was the place where kids stopped for penny candy or for a Coke. He also had a stand with comic books. You could get comic books without covers for a nickel.

In front of his counter, he had a Coca Cola cooler in which the bottles sat in very cold water. The door was on the top, and you had to pull it up. Then you saw the bottles sitting in the water and you also saw a stream of extremely cold water coming out of a pump. Boys would try to hold their hand in the stream of cold water as long as they could. It was a mark of “strength and power”.

Kids stopped at Johnny’s on the way to or from school, on the way to Pesci Park, on the way to Union School for basketball practice, and on the way to St. Mary’s school for catechism class or choir practice. In the eyes of the youth of downtown Windsor Locks in the 1950s and 60s, there were two iconic stores: Marconi’s Luncheonette, which we called “Wuzzy’s,” and Johnny Cappa’s Market, which we called “Johnny’s”.

Adults frequented Johnny’s too, although for different reasons. Let’s look at some of those reasons. Johnny made fresh grinders for you. You could get a salami, cheese, lettuce and tomato grinder for 50 cents. Johnny’s Market was a single small room, but it was a very tall room, and there were shelves all the way up to the ceiling. Those shelves were packed. He had a few each of lots of items, and he would get them down with a long stick with a claw on the end. Johnny operated that device with great skill. Nothing ever fell.

The Italian community in Windsor Locks loved a brand of bread made in Hartford. It was made by the Moon Bakery. They made the classic round loaf of Italian bread with a thick crust. It came in a white bag. The only problem with this delicious bread was that if you didn’t eat it in about a day, it got as very hard. Of course, even then you could toast it, or dip it in various things like milk. My grandfather, Vito Colapietro, loved to dip it in a glass of wine. Moon Bakery also made grinder rolls. These might have been the best grinder rolls ever made. You could buy them at Aldo’s, Maria’s, the A&P, and Johnny’s. However, Aldo’s, Maria’s and the A&P ran out early. Somehow, Johnny’s always seemed to have them. You could get them there in the evening. Those Moon Bakery grinder rolls cost 5 cents apiece.

There was one more thing which made Johnny’s really special, and way ahead of his time. Johnny’s market was one of the first grocery stores anywhere to make deliveries. His brother, Eddie, had a pickup truck and he made deliveries all day. That gave Johnny’s an advantage over the other markets. Back then, not everyone owned a car. The deliveries were something many people depended on.

Johnny Cappa was born in 1912 and died in 1983. He ran his Market for 28 years, from 1947 to 1975, when he retired. However, none of us really knew Johnny. We just went there for penny candy, a loaf of bread, a Coca Cola or a comic book. We went there as part of a group on bicycles.

Just how popular Johnny Cappa was back then became clear to me this evening when I put up a single, grainy photo of Johnny's Market on the Facebook website known as "You know you are from Windsor Locks when," and it got 45 "likes" and 15 responses in the first three hours it was up. On the spur of the moment, I decided to try to learn what I could about Johnny Cappa by doing a search on the Internet. A search of the Springfield Union newspapers yielded seven newspaper articles. They shed a bit of light on the life of Johnny Cappa -- not much light -- but it was very satisfying. I learned more by reading those seven news clippings than I did from visiting his store an uncountable number of times. All seven of those articles are included below.

The first things that came to light were the dates of his birth and death, the year he started his market and the year he retired. All this was stated above. Two articles show that he was a member of the Parent Teacher Association. Another described a break-in at his home, and yet another described how a car smashed into his house. When the car smashed into his house, those who were hurt were attended by Dr. Ettore F. Carneglia. Finally there was the announcement of Johnny Cappa's death.

As I look back at my years growing up in Windsor Locks, I can say that Johnny Cappa and Johnny's Market made a good life even better. He was a boon to the community. He left a good feeling in the minds of the kids and adults who knew him and frequented his market.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT



Umberto Pesci, Fidelio Giannezzi, Eddie Cappa, Leo Montemerlo 1927

MRS. TERSILIA CAPPA
Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 28.—Mrs. Tersilia Cappa of 18 Church St., widow of Frank Cappa, died at her home yesterday, following a brief illness. She was born in Italy, and had resided in this town the past 50 years.
 She leaves two daughters, Mrs. Virginia Hancock of this town and Mrs. Frank Sabonis of Broad Brook; three sons, Anthony, John and Edward Cappa, all of this town; also one grandson.
 The funeral will be held tomorrow morning at 8:30 at the Johnson funeral home on Oak St., followed by requiem high mass in St. Mary's Church at 9. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Springfield Union
August 29, 1955

Groups of PTA Are Announced

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn.—Mrs. William Levine, president of Windsor Locks PTA, has announced chairmen of the committees for the year. The PTA includes the high school, Union School and North Street School.
 Chairman of the ways and means committee is the first vice-president, Mrs. Lawrence Costello of Circle Dr.; program, the second vice-president, Chester Babiarez of Elm St.; publicity, Mrs. James Hanley of Circle Dr., and Mrs. Chester Babiarez of Elm St.; representative to scholarship committee, Mrs. Norman Green, South Main St.; refreshments, Mrs. David Bazyk of Circle Dr. and cochairman, Mrs. John Cappa of Suffolk St.; hospitality, Mrs. Lawrence Savoie of Sunset St. and cochairman, Mrs. Edward Olin-sky, Sunset St.; bulletins and publications, Mrs. Edward Jansen, Middle Dr.; printing of Chatter, Mrs. William Fitzgerald of Wedemeyer St.; editor of

Springfield Union
July 28, 1959

ANTHONY J. CAPPA**WINDSOR LOCKS**

Conn. — Anthony J. Cappa of 18 Church St., died Wednesday in Hartford Hospital. Born in Argentina, son of the late Frank and Theresa (Portoluppi) Cappa, he spent most of his life in this town. He leaves two brothers, John A. Cappa and Edward J. Cappa, both of this town; two sisters, Mrs. Sherman Hancock of this town and Mrs. Frank Sabonis of Broad Brook. The funeral will be held Saturday morning at 8.30 at Johnson funeral home on Oak St., with a requiem high mass in St. Mary's Church at 9. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

Springfield Union

Feb. 5, 1960

Windsor Locks Briefs**WINDSOR LOCKS**

Conn. — The Ladies Auxiliary of Smalley Brothers Post, VFW, will meet Sept. 8 at 8 at the post home. Mrs. Charles Hirth, department president, will make her official visit.

Police are investigating a reported break at the home of John Cappa of 57 Suffield St. According to police, the break occurred between 7.40 and 9.40 p. m. Wednesday. Entrance to the home allegedly was made by breaking a window in a kitchen door and opening the door from the inside. The kitchen and a bedroom appeared to be ransacked but nothing was reported taken.

Springfield Union

Aug. 21, 1965

WINDSOR LOCKS BRIEFS

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — A special meeting of Windsor Locks PTA will be held in Union School on Church St. next Wednesday evening, Feb. 10, at 8 p. m. "Brotherhood" will be the theme for the meeting. Guest speakers will be Raymond A. Roncari, presently national director of the Catholic Men's Retreat Movement; Rabbi Louis Kaplan of the Beth Hillel Synagog in Bloomfield; and Rev. Henry A. Peck, pastor of Windsor Locks Congregational Church. The Junior Choir of St. Mary's Church, under direction of Frank Borchetta, and the Junior Choir of the Congregational Church, under direction of Miss Ethyl Bacon, will sing for the program. Room mothers of the fourth grades of the local public schools and Mrs. Landers' morning kindergarten class will assist Mrs. David Bazyk and Mrs. John Cappa, refreshments chairmen.

Springfield Union

Feb. 6, 1960

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn.—A car owned and operated by Mrs. Ann Marie Bennett of East St., Suffield, got out of control Friday night near Suffield St. and Ahern Ave. and went onto the front lawn of John **Cappa** of 57 Suffield St. It crashed into the front of the **Cappa** home and halted with the front of the car in the living room.

Hurt Seriously

Mrs. Bennett and a passenger, Michael Sullivan, also of East St., were seriously injured and were rushed to Springfield Hospital in the Lions Club ambulance. They were attended at the scene by Dr. E. F. Carniglia. Much damage was done to the car and the front of the home. Patrolmen Theodore Fisher is in charge of the police investigation.

Cappa, who operates the Chestnut St. grocery store, had just arrived home. He and his wife were in the rear of the house about ready to eat supper when the crash occurred.

Springfield Union
Dec. 9, 1961

John **Cappa dies at 71; once ran grocery store**

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — John A. **Cappa**, 71, of 57 Suffield St., retired 28-year proprietor of a Chestnut Street grocery store, died Friday at home.

A lifelong resident of **Windsor Locks**, he retired in 1975.

He was a communicant of St. Mary's Church.

He leaves his wife, the former Almerna Maine; and a brother, Edward A. of **Windsor Locks**.

The funeral will be Monday morning at Kania Funeral Home and in the church with burial in Grove Cemetery. Donations may be made to American Heart Association, or **Windsor Locks** Lions Club Ambulance Fund.

Springfield Union
Sept. 18, 1983

Chapter 5

Sisitzky's Market

From the turn of the century to the 1960s, Windsor Locks was home to a number of small family-owned “markets”. Although the town had a large A&P and a First National supermarket, these small neighborhood markets thrived. Each had a cadre of loyal customers. These were the early “convenience stores”. In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, Windsor Locks had: Johnny Cappa's, Maria's, Bert's, Aldo's and Macaluso's. There were many earlier markets of this type, such as:

- C. Colli's Meat and Groceries, which was the earliest
- The A.B.C. Company on Main Street
- Preli's on Grove Street
- Joe Balboni's Market predated Bert's on North Street
- Hagerty's Market predated Malec's Market on School Street
- F. Barbari **
- A. Sfreddo **
- J. F. Wallace **
- Joe Borracci's Market predated Aldo's on Oak Street *
- P. Casinghino at 9 Spring Street *
- S. Fisher at 202 Main Street *
- D. Garbarino at 176 Main Street *
- Italian Co-operative Store at 202 Main Street *
- Keever Brothers at 40 Main Street*
- R. M. Montagna at 178 Main Street*
- P. Tenerowicz at 1 South Street * (was small Polish Market under the Tenerowicz duplex)
- Sisitzky's Market at 112 Main Street *

* Those with single asterisks were in a list of markets in a White House Coffee advertisement in the Springfield Republican of January 9, 1931

** Those with a double asterisks were in a list of markets in an Armour Co. advertisement in the Springfield Republican of October 11, 1924.

While information about Johnny Cappa's, Bert's, Aldo's and Macaluso's are available, not much could be found about the earlier markets. A computer search of area newspapers for articles on most of the early markets yielded few results. However, a computer search on the name “Sisitzky” yielded 64 newspaper articles in the 1900-1961 timeframe. Not all of those articles are about the Sisitzky market of Windsor Locks. There were Sisitzkys in Springfield, Thompsonville, and Windsor. There were at least six markets in the area run by people named Sisitzky, some of whom were related. Besides operating markets, David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks, and the Sisitzkys of Thompsonville owned and rented tenements, stores and offices.

This article covers David Sisitzky, the Sisitzky Market of Windsor Locks, and the Sisitzkys of neighboring towns. Below is a photo of the Sisitzky Market on Main Street. Notice the building that it is in, which is between the First National Stores on the left, and Carlisle's on the right. The building has four storefronts on the street level. The building also contains offices and tenements. David Sisitzky bought the entire building, and was in the business of renting stores, offices and tenements, as well as running his market.



Sisitzky's Market, 108 Main St, Windsor Locks, Conn

DAVID SISITZKY

From the 1910 Census, we learn that his name at birth was David Jisitzky. He was born to Aron and Sarah Jisitzky in Russia in 1893. By the time of the 1910 US Census, he had four sisters, Rachel (21), and Bessie (21), Julie (15) and E. Bessie (11), and one brother, Max (19). In 1910, at the age of 17, he and his parents' family were living in Brooklyn, New York. At that time, his father was 47 and his mother was 44. We learn from his World War I Draft Registration form that he was born in Kovno, Russia. His parents and siblings were also born there. They immigrated to the United States in 1908.

In the 1920 Census, the family name had changed to Sissitzky. Notice the double "s" in the middle of the name. His father was no longer listed on the Census. His mother was listed at the head of household. They were living in East Windsor, Connecticut. His family could not be found in the 1930 Census.

In the 1940 United States Census, he had changed his name to David Sisk. The names of his wife and children had also been changed to Sisk. As of the 1940 Census, he was 47 years old and living in Hartford with his wife, Pearl (44), their three children: Alvin (18), Robert (11) and Sidney (8), and their maid, Phyllis Oliwa (33). Note that in

1940, David and Pearl had an 18 year old son, indicating that they were probably married in 1921, right after the 1920 Census had been done.

No other US Census records could be found on his family. Connecticut Death Records show that he died on October 7, 1979 at the age of 87, while living in Bloomfield, Connecticut.

SISITZKY'S MARKET AND REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

Sisitzky's Market was at 112 Main Street in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Even though David Sisitzky changed his name to Sisk, the newspapers continue to refer to him as Sisitzky. The name of Sisitzky's Market did not change as it went through three different owners during its existence from about 1915 to about 1962.

The story of the Sisitzky Market on Windsor Locks' Main Street is a rich one, with three major characters: David Sisitzky, William Buckley, and James Price. David Sisitzky opened his market in about 1915, when he was only 22. While we don't know when he purchased the whole building, he did it was before 1920. The June 9, 1920 issue of the Springfield Republican had an article which said that he was renting tenements to 150 people. He was also renting stores on the street level of his building and offices and tenements in the rest of the building. In other towns, it would be amazing that an immigrant who was less than 30 years old could buy a large, two story, brick building on a prime location in downtown Windsor Locks. However in the early 1900s, Windsor Locks had a number of young entrepreneurial immigrants who rose to wealth in a relatively short period of time. They included: Charles Colli, Leo Viola, Dominick Alfano, Moses Goldfarb, Tommaso Zaccheo, the Colapietro brothers (Vito, Pasquale, and Leo), and others.

The first mention of Sisitsky's Market in regional newspapers was in the April 22, 1916 issue of the Springfield Republican. The market was in a list of stores that sold Armour Star meats. Since his store was not listed on the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks, we can assume that the market started between 1914 and 1916.

Sisitzky's Market had advertisements in a number of newspapers in 1916, and in that year, he also advertised for a butcher to work in his market. The meat advertisements were mostly ads for Armour Star meats, which listed the names of all of the local markets at which those products were sold. These ads continued into the 1920s, at which time a similar ad appeared for "White House Coffee".

In the June 9, 1920 issue of the Springfield Republican, there was an article which addressed David Sisitzky's attempt to increase rents for 150 tenants by an average of \$10. The article says that he repudiated the charge of being a "rent profiteer". He said that the rent increases were needed to put the tenements in good order and to get a fair return on his investment. At a meeting on June 9, he backed down from the rent increases, declaring that they were a mistake, and that rents would not increase.

In 1936, he leased an office on the second floor of his building to the Democratic party of Windsor Locks. (October 27, 1936 Springfield Republican)

In 1940, he took a motor trip to Florida and to other Southern points. The 1940 Census reports said that, his family had a maid. Based on these things, we can

conclude that the Sisitzky family was doing pretty well. (Springfield Republican of March 9, 1940)

On September 1, 1951, Dr. Michael Eilbergas leased an office in the Sisitzky building. He got his medical degree in Zurich, Switzerland, and was moving to Windsor Locks from Queens General Hospital in New York City. (Springfield Union, August 25, 1951)

In 1957, Mr. Sisitzky joined with Mr. Graziani to sell adjoining pieces of land to the town of Windsor Locks for use as a parking lot behind the First national Bank building. (Springfield Union, April 22, 1957)

Now we return to a focus on Sisitzky's Market. Mr. Dan Kervick of Windsor Locks remembers "Dave" Sisitzky very well. He remembers going to the store in the late 1940s. He found Dave to be a friendly, outgoing person. He often saw Mr. Sisitzky help elderly customers. He also remembers the two men who took over the Market so that Mr. Sisitzky could focus on his large rental business. They were Mr. William Buckley and Mr. James Price. Originally, Mr. Sisitzky hired Bill Buckley as a butcher, and a young James Price, as a delivery boy. Bill Buckley taught Jim Price the butcher's trade.

The April 8, 1952 issue of the Springfield Union had a reference to the "Buckley and Price" market on Main Street. We do not know whether Bill Buckley and Jim Price owned the business jointly for a time. It is likely that Bill Buckley bought the Market sometime in the 1940s. We know that Bill retired from the Market business in 1958. Beth Price Knecht, Jim Price's daughter, thinks that her father bought the store from Bill Buckley in about 1955.

From 1958 to 1961, Sisitzky's Market had a bowling team that participated in a league at the Villa Rose bowling lanes. The results of their matches were often found in the Springfield Republican newspapers from 1958 to 1961. Jim Price was an avid bowler.

Both Bill Buckley and Jim Price were well known and well liked citizens of Windsor Locks. Bill Buckley was born in Holyoke, MA, on June 26, 1892, so he was about the same age as David Sisitzky. He resided in Windsor Locks for 45 years. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, the Gens-Viola Post of the American Legion, and a member of the Lions Club. He had served with the Army in World War I. He married Barbara Krauss. (Springfield Union issue of January 7, 1957)

Jim Price was born on August 8, 1920. He was a butcher for a long time. He learned the trade from Bill Buckley at Sisitzky's Market, before buying the Market. After Sisitzky's Market closed in the 1960s, he worked for Shop Rite Supermarkets for 22 years. He was in the Navy in World War II. He was a member of the Smalley Brothers Post 6123 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He married Louise Osborn. They had a son, Richard, and a daughter, Beth. He died in September 1991. He was an avid sportsman, hunter and angler. He collected antique cars and was a breeder of golden retrievers (Springfield Union-News, Sept 18, 1991)

MEMORIES OF SISITZKY'S MARKET

Two people who spent much time in Sisitzky's Market have offered comments which provide insight into the store.

Beth Price Knecht, the daughter of Jim Price, knew the store well. She remembers the following: "My dad, Jim Price, bought the store from Bill Buckley. The Sisitzky family owned the building. I remember it had green and white tile floor. There was Dreikorn bread and other brands of bread in the front and to your left as you entered. The cash register was in the front of the store. I think there were two aisles. The meat counter was in the back. My dad was a meat cutter, so that was his domain. I remember him grinding fresh hamburger and cutting roasts to suit each customer's needs. Everything was wrapped in butcher paper back then. The walk-in cooler was in back, and to the left. I remember my dad making me a cup out of folded paper, so I could get a drink of water. On Fridays, they would sometimes do a barbecue at Pesci Park. You brought your own food and the staff would cook it. My mom would wrap up a couple hot dogs in paper, squirt some mustard into waxed paper and fold it up, add hot dog rolls, dessert and a drink, and I'd go off to the park for the day. When the store closed, we had the chest freezer in our basement for many years. The very best part of Sisitzky market was that they used to deliver groceries after you called in your order. My dad was a delivery boy in the late 1930s. He delivered groceries to my maternal grandparents farm in Warehouse Point. That's how my parents met! If not for the market, I wouldn't be here!"

She continued: "The store kept the Sisitzky name. I would guess that my father bought the business in around 1955. I vaguely remember Bill Buckley. My mom worked in the store on Fridays. The store closed down around 1961"

Dan Kervick said: "My dad owned Kervick's Express, a trucking Company that operated between Hartford and Suffield, and in surrounding towns. My dad would have stops at Sisitsky's at least two times a week, bringing fresh meat from Hartford meat packing houses such as "Armour". Each delivery usually included a leg of beef and a whole lamb."

Kervick continued: "In the large walk-in cooler in the market, there were two wooden barrels. There were pickles in one and corned beef in the other. Dave Sisitzky bought cucumbers from local farmers and put them in Bill Buckley's special brine. Soon you had great pickles, and they only cost a dime. You could go into the store and pick out a piece of meat for corned beef. Bill Buckley would mark the piece of meat with a colored stick, and then record in a little book, and put the meat in the wooden barrel for you to pick up a week later. You got "melt in your mouth" corned beef which was perfectly flavored. I had personal experience selling fresh eggs to Dave from chickens that I raised. I also sold him shad from the canal. I would catch a shad or two. I was not a fisherman. I speared them. I would get on my bike, and take them to Sisitzky's and sell them for ten cents per fish. On the way home, I would stop at the Windsor Locks Bakery and buy one jelly doughnut for a nickel."

SISITZKY MARKETS AND BUSINESSES IN NEARBY TOWNS

A search of newspaper articles mentioning the name "Sisitzky" between the years of 1900 and 1950, showed that there were Sisitzky businesses in Springfield, Windsor, Thompsonville and Windsor Locks. The Sisitskys of Windsor and Windsor Locks were relatives. The Sisitzky's of Thompsonville were also of Russian descent, but no evidence could be found that they were related to the other Sisitzkys.

David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks and Max Sisitzky were sons of Aron Jisitzky. Both of them later changed the spelling of their last names to Sisitzky. Max was born in 1891 and David was born in 1893. Both were born in Kosno, Russia.

Max moved to Springfield where he lived on Groveland St. He operated the Longmeadow Market before moving to Windsor, Conn. In Windsor, he operated the Plaza Market for 30 years. After retiring from his market, Max and his wife, Nellie, moved to Miami Beach, Florida, where he died on March 16, 1960.

The April 7, 1914 Springfield Union shows two markets in Springfield, Mass. One was owned by Aaron Sisitzky at 417 Walnut Street. The other was owned by J. Sisitzky at 99 Eastern Avenue. No information could be found on either of them in the United States Censuses or elsewhere.

The Sisitzky family of Thompsonville was very active in business. The July 31, 1910 Springfield Republican has a story that states: "The new Sisitzky theater on Asnuntuck Street, which is fast nearing completion, will be one of the most substantial buildings for theater purposes between New York and Boston."

Miss Flora Sisitzky, daughter of Nathan Sisitzky of Thompsonville, married Max Block in October 1912. After her father retired in about 1910, Flora assumed control of both of his stores. She then also assumed management of the family's Majestic Theater. Miss Sisitzky was one of the few women to take a lead role in business in this time period. (October 12, 1912 Springfield Republican) It should be noted that the theater was very large. It had 1200 seats. It was for live performances, not movies (May 21, 1910 Springfield Republican)

The June 6, 1912 issue of the Springfield Republican says that the 5 and 10-cent store in the Sisitzky block on South Main Street of Thompsonville was robbed. From this we see that they owned a "Block," that is, a large multipurpose commercial building in town.

The Springfield Union of April 7, 1914 shows P. Sisitzky of Thompsonville owning a meat market. That would be Philip Sisitzky.

The January 13, 1915 Springfield Republican announces the marriage of Philip Sisitzky, son of Nathan Sisitzky, to Miss Eva Saffire of New York City. Her father is a diamond merchant.

The September 18, 1935 Springfield Republican has an article stating that Nathan Sisitzky is demolishing the business block on Pearl Street that he owns. The building was formerly occupied by his father, Philip Sisitzky as a market and grocery store, and by various other lines of business in the adjoining stores. It goes on to say that Nathan Sisitzky plans to clean up the ruins of what was formerly the residence of the late John L. Houston, who for many years was the head of the Hartford Carpet Company.

The January 17, 1940 Springfield Republican has an article announcing that Philip Sisitzky of Thompsonville, owner of the Longmeadow Public Market, is going to retire from the business. Philip Sisitzky plans to move to Miami, Florida for his retirement.

We know that Max Sisitzky of Windsor, Connecticut once owned the Longmeadow Market, and then retired to Miami, and that Philip Sisitzky of Thompsonville later owned the Longmeadow Market and then retired to Miami. That would seem to indicate some form of relationship between the two. However, no evidence of this could be found in the US Censuses or elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

This article focussed on David Sisitzky and his market on Main Street in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. We saw that he was also into the business of owning a large building in which he rented out stores, offices and tenements. He hired Bill Buckley and James Price to work in his Market. Bill was an experienced butcher. James was brought on to be a delivery boy. Bill taught Jim the butcher trade, and he later bought the market from David Sisitzky. Later, James bought the business from Bill. The market existed from about 1915 to the early 1960s. It did not change its name even though ownership changed. It was a well known and well liked market which sold all of the things you would expect to find in a market, but specialized in excellent meat.

We saw that there were Sisitzky Markets in Springfield, Longmeadow, Thompsonville, and Windsor well as in Windsor Locks. Max Sisitzky of Thompsonville and David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks, were brothers. Philip, Nathan and Flora were active entrepreneurs in Thompsonville. David Sisitzky was an active real estate entrepreneur in Windsor Locks, in addition to owning a market. One can only conclude that the Sisitzkys were accomplished, successful business persons, both in grocery markets and in real estate.

SOURCES

1. Springfield Republican of January 9, 1931 - White House Coffee ad
2. Springfield Republican of October 11, 1924 - Armour ad
3. 1910 US Census - David Jisitzky
4. 1920 US Census - David Sissitzky
5. Connecticut Death Records - David Sisk
6. Springfield Republican of June 9, 1920 - Article on David Sisitzky rent rise
7. Springfield Republican of April 22, 1916 - Armour ad
8. Springfield Republican of October 27, 1936 - lease office to Democratic party
9. Springfield Republican of September 1, 1951 - lease office to Dr. Eilbergas
10. Springfield Union issue of April 22, 1957 - sold land to town for parking lot
11. Springfield Union of January 7, 1957 - William Buckley obituary
12. Springfield Union of April 13, 1954 - Armour ad
13. Springfield Union-News, Sept 18, 1991 - James Price obituary
14. Springfield Union of April 7, 1914 - Armour ad
15. Springfield Republican of July 31, 1910 - Sisitzky builds large theater
16. Springfield Republican of October 11, 1912 - wedding of Flora Sisitzky
17. Springfield Republican of June 6, 1912 - Sisitzky store robbed
18. Springfield Republican of January 13, 1915 - Wedding of Philip Sisitzky
19. Springfield Republican of January 18, 1935 - Nathan Sisitzky demolishing old stores
20. Springfield Republican of January 17, 1940 - Philip Sisitzky retiring to Florida
21. Springfield Union of March 16, 1969 - Max Sisitzky retiring to Florida

Chapter 6

Bert's Market

Hubert F. "Bert" Nussbaum, was the proprietor of Bert's Market. He was born in Buffalo, NY, the son of Norman and Lorraine (Boyle) Nussbaum. Bert and his wife, Ruth (maiden name - Lugauskas) had two sons, James and Robert, and a daughter, Noreen.

Bert's Market served good fresh food. He went to Barberi's Home Style Market each morning to get fresh bread, rolls and other goodies. He was his own butcher. He and his wife, Ruth, made their own German potato salad. He carried a wide variety of groceries and household needs. He sold beer, soda, milk, ice cream, etc. Of course, he had variety of penny candy for the children. He carried products of the Sweet Life Co., whose plant was behind Hood's Ice Cream plant in Suffield.

Like the other small Markets of Windsor Locks in the 1900s, Bert's Market was a forerunner of the Seven-Eleven convenience store. Like Johnny Cappa's Market and Aldo Sartirana's Oak Street market, Bert had a delivery service. It is easy to forget that back in the 1950s, not every family had a car. Like the other neighborhood markets, Bert hired local boys to work in his store. One of them was James Hanley, who has fond memories of his job at Bert's.



Bert's Market, North Street, near Suffield Street

Joe Marinone owned the land that Bert's Market was on. He bought it from Joe Balboni, who had been operating Balboni's Market there. Bert got a 25 year lease on the property and operated his market there from 1947 to Dec. 31, 1972, when his lease ran out. However, Bert was not ready for retirement at that time. He worked at Macaluso's Market on Turnpike Road until his new business, Bert's Spirit Shoppe, was ready for business. It was on the corner of North Street and Turnpike Road. Bert and his wife, Ruth, worked together at his new store, as they had for more than two decades at Bert's Market. As of this writing (2017), Bert's Spirit Shoppe is still in alive and well and being operated by Bert's son, Jimmy. See the photo of Bert's Spirit Shoppe.



Bert's Spirit Shppe, North St and Route

During World War II, Bert was in the Army, where he was a Supply Sergeant at Bradley Field. His wife, Ruth, also worked for the 6th Army Supply Office at the military airfield in Windsor Locks. However, he met Ruth one day while he was hitchhiking to a USO club dance in town. She stopped to pick him up. Getting into the car, he tripped and fell into puddle by a sewer drain on the curb. Later, at the dance, he asked her to dance. His opening line was: "I'm the one who fell for you earlier today".

One day, Lt. Eugene M. Bradley was in Bert's office when he was a supply sergeant with the 6th Army Air Corps supply office at the air field, just hours before he went on the training flight in which he crashed and died. The airfield was named Bradley Field after him.

Bert was an active member of Riverside Council #26 of the Knights of Columbus, a commander of the Gensi-Viola Post #36 of the American Legion. He was also a commander of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 17-2. He was one of the original drivers of the Windsor Locks ambulance.

Bert was a successful Windsor Locks entrepreneur, a husband, a father, a veteran, and a community leader.



Bert Nussbaum

Chapter 7

Aldo Sartirana's Oak Street Market

Aldo Sartirana was the owner and operator of the Oak Street Market. Aldo and his store were fixtures in the Windsor Locks' downtown area prior to the "redevelopment" of Main Street, which eliminated all of the downtown retail stores and rental housing. From 1900 to 1970, there were a number of markets (Aldo's, Maria's, Johnny Cappa's, the ABC Market, Spinelli's, Sisitzky's, etc.) and a couple of Supermarkets (A&P and the First National).

All of these grocery stores, except for the A&P and the First National, were small "Mom and Pop" operations. They were strictly family businesses whose success was dependent on the skills and drive of a single person. While their families were crucial to their ability to survive, the businesses really depended on the person who ran the store. That person had to know the meat business, the grocery business, and all aspects of running a business.

Aldo graduated from Windsor Lock High School, which was in the old Union School in 1934. The graduation class only had 34 students. While in high school, their gym class was held on the third floor of the Central Hall Block, which was where the A&P was located in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. At the time, the Central Hall block had shops on the first floor, the telephone company on the second floor, and a room on the third floor that was used for basketball, boxing, and dances. Aldo worked after school at the A&P, which was then on the corner of Church and Main Streets. He made 17 cents an hour. After graduation, he took a full time position at the A&P, working for Mr. Jimmy Franklin. He was promoted to Produce Manager. See the photo below of Aldo behind the counter of the A&P in the late 1930s.



Aldo Sartirana, A&P produce manager. Late 1930s

Aldo left the A&P after six years and went with Coca-Cola. He was with them from 1940 to 1951, except for the three and a half years he spent in the Army. He rose to the level of Sergeant Major. He was on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Luckily he survived the war and returned to Windsor Locks to continue his life. He married Yolanda Campominosi when he left the Army in 1945.

It was about 1952 when he started his own Oak Street Market, just up the hill a short way from Main Street, on the North side of Oak Street. Previously the store had been Joe Borracci's meat market. Although small, the store was packed with Italian specialties. In the photograph below, Aldo and his father in law, Tony Campominosi are in front of Aldo's Oak Street Market.



Unidentified man, Aldo Satirana, Tony Campominosi 1957

Aldo really focused on the customer. It didn't matter if all you wanted was a loaf of bread or a few slices of processed meat, you were treated well. Tony's father-in-law, Tony Campominosi, worked there, as did Aldo's son, Bobby, who is seen in the next photograph, behind the counter. The boy on the right in that photo is Jim Roche, who had a part-time job there while in high school.



Aldo's son Bobby, and Jim Roche, who worked at the store

Jim Roche and Chet Pohorylo were both high schoolers who worked for Aldo in the 1960 timeframe. Both have said that they enjoyed working for Aldo. Aldo's store was one of the first markets in Windsor Locks to make home deliveries. Aldo operated his store for 22 years. It closed in about 1974, when Main Street and the area to the west of it were torn down during the redevelopment of the Main Street area.

Aldo was an active citizen of Windsor Locks. He was active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and in the Knights of Columbus. While being interviewed by Jack Redmond, he said: "The greatest thing that ever happened to me was meeting and marrying Yolanda."

From about 1910 to about 1940, there was another Italian grocery store on Grove Street, not far up from Grove St. It was owned by Bart Preli. Below is a photograph of Preli's store. It was on the ground floor, on the right. Aldo Sartirana's wife was Yolanda Camponimosi. Bart Preli and his wife, Theodora, were Yolanda's uncle and aunt. Even more interesting was the fact that in 1920, Bart Preli was renting a section of his house out to the family of Joseph "Red" Ambrosetti. Mr. Ambrosetti was an owner of the ABC Market on Main St. There was a tight-knit group of Windsor Locks folks who owned the Italian grocery stores.



Preli's Grocery Store, 24 Grove Street, Windor Locks, Connecticut 1920's

Below is a photo of Joe Borracci's market, which preceded Aldo's Oak Street Market in the same location. Notice the hand-painted sign saying "JOE'S", which is directly above the man who walking down the street.



*Joe Borracci's Market on Oak St.,
Later became Aldo's Oak Street Market*

Chapter 8

Marconi Brothers Luncheonette

The Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was on the corner of Spring Street and Main Street. It was a lot of things to a lot of people. Teenagers remember it as a hangout. The booths in the back were a great place to relax with friends. There was a time when Ella Grasso, who later became the Governor of Connecticut, often had breakfast there. The singer, Gene Pitney, went there a number of times, always without advance notice. The popular radio announcers, Bob Steele and Brad Davis often visited Marconi's and then mentioned it on their radio shows.

The Marconi brothers were Johnny, Louie and Angelo. Angelo's nickname was "Wuzzy". There is a story about how he got his nickname. On one particular Sunday morning, Angelo was supposed to serve Mass at St. Mary's Church, but he didn't show up. Father Grady wanted to find out why, so he asked some of Angelo's friends: "Angelo wasn't sick, was he?" The "was he" sounded like Wuzzy, and it became Angelo's nickname. Below is a photo of the exterior of Marconi's Luncheonette.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's".
A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .

Two of the Marconi brothers were amateur boxers as young men. The January 20 and 23, 1929 issues of the Springfield Republican had articles showing that Angelo and Louie Marconi were in boxing matches in Central Hall. Central Hall was the building which preceded the A&P, across Main Street from the Railroad Station.

A discussion in 2016 among people who used to frequent the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette led to some interesting memories. One remembered that guitar lessons were given on the floor above the Luncheonette. A few remembered that their parents told them that they weren't allowed to go to Marconi's. Some remember playing "church hooky" on Sunday morning, and going to Marconi's instead. One remembered the Saturday night ritual of standing in front of Marconi's, trying to get a group together to go to Riverside Park. A few, who worked as paper boys while in high school, remembered going to Marconi's on payday, and spending too much money on the pinball machine. One remembered that all of the Marconi brothers had been alter boys at St. Mary's.

There were booths and a pinball machine in the back. They served delicious Cherry Cokes, homemade meatballs and tomato sauce, burgers and fries, and sausage grinders. They also made an excellent chopped pickle and bologna sandwich.



**Interior of Marconi Brothers Luncheonette.
Louie Marconi is on the left. Waitress not identified**

In the 1960s, the town of Windsor Locks decided to redevelop the Main Street area. It required all retail business owners along Main Street to sell their businesses to the town. Some of the businesses did so readily. Some fought it. The Marconi brothers held out the longest. Eventually, they and the rest of the holdouts lost the battle, and had to sell. The three brothers were rightfully proud of having fought the good fight. They were one of the few businesses which moved to another location. The "Donut Kettle" moved to another location in Windsor Locks. The Marconi Brothers moved their luncheonette to Suffield. Below are two newspaper clippings about the end of the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette on Main Street.

Below are two newspaper stories of the last days of the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette on Main Street, and a high school photo of Louis.



Last Main St. business to sign

John, Angelo, and Louis Marconi take a moment off from their work at Marconi Bros. Luncheonette this week. Yesterday, in signing with the Redevelopment Commission for the sale of their building on the corner of Main Street and Spring Street, they became the last of the Main Street businesses to sell to the agency. The only other business remaining within the urban renewal area which has not yet been acquired by the Redevelopment Commission is the Windsor Locks Journal. Louis Marconi and family will be opening up business on May 20 in Suffield in what is now Buster's in the John's Foodtown shopping plaza. John and Angelo report that they will be retiring temporarily. However, no closing date has actually been set for the present luncheonette, with the two brothers planning to continue until the Redevelopment Agency requires them to leave. Louis described his new Suffield situation . . . not like moving into a strange town." He had just moved out of his hometown of his wife.

Babysitting To End in Marconi's

By BRUCE FERGUSON
Staff Reporter

Enfield

WINDSOR LOCKS — The summer, since Louis Marconi has bought Bunter's Restaurant, 140 Mountain Rd., and will be moving in May and will be moving in May.

20 Although the Windsor Locks Redevelopment Agency has given the brothers until July to vacate their Main Street business.

Like many Main Street businessmen who must move out of their establishments to make way for downtown renewal, Marconi has expressed some bitterness about the way the agency has gone about their own business.

"We believed the redevelopment," he said, "but not in the manner in which it was carried out."

"Our association with the people in Windsor Locks has always been neighborly. We just regret that because of the redevelopment agency we're out of business in Windsor Locks."

Although Angelo and Louis Marconi plan to go into semi-retirement, Louis seems to be looking forward to starting over again in a place he says is a "better operation, a bigger, straighter business."

The people in Windsor Locks will be losing their best babysitter," said Louis as his brothers served the row of customers sipping coffee, eating breakfast, and talking over the morning news.

"Parents will say to their kids, 'here, here's some money.' Go down to Marconi's," Lou continued. "And the kids will come here and drink colas . . . parents call here all the time for their kids."

It's possible that Suffolk parents will gain the babysitting business from this place, Windsor Locks says this

It certainly will be a change from the newstand the Marconi brothers opened up in October of 1929, a business that was abruptly closed down by a hurricane in 1938, Louis said.

When Natale Tambussi, uncle of gubernatorial candidate Ella Grasso, bought the Rialto Theater Building around that time, the Marconi brothers were operating an ice cream parlor in the first floor of the building. The theater itself was on the second floor, the post office in part of the first floor as well.

When the brothers moved in to their present establishment, they had to convert a grocery store into the lunchette that over the years became a gathering place for youth and workers from the nearby factories.

One such worker, Dexter employee Frank Wolias, has been coming to Marconi's for over 25 years, and said of the place: "You get the best grade 'a,' whatever you want to call it."

The brothers have also had steady customers of better known town residents.

"You can't a half hour too late," Louis said Friday. "Our

future governor was here," he added, referring of course, to Mrs. Grasso.

"She's a steady customer, when she's in town."

If the lunchette was going to be around for a while longer it could possibly have served as a debating forum for gubernatorial candidates, since Louis also said that whenever Bob Steele is in the area he stops in for a bite to eat.

"He always orders a pastrami sandwich," Louis said.

The brothers have served as "babysitters" to a generation of kids, served lunch to workers and possible governors, and in their youth they also served a variety of high-crowns, left books and pads to opponents in the boxing ring, according to Tambussi, who said he has known them all his life.

Kindently Louis and Angelo were at one time printers, squaring in local rings, including one located in a dried up pond off Spring Street.

"One's knows how much (money) they got," Tambussi said, "but I don't think they were fighting for nothing."

"They were quite scrappy. They were two boys."



MR. AND MRS. LOUIS MARCONI
Windsor Locks' best, Suffolk's gain

—(T-100) Photo by B. J. Schuman

Below is a high school photo of Louis Marconi



Chapter 9

Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant of Windsor Locks: 1942-2016



The Charles-Ten Restaurant was:

- the longest-operating restaurant in Windsor Locks
- a family owned and run restaurant
- the place where everyone knew your name
- host to five generations of patrons
- a restaurant that asked you to eat before you come because the wait for food is long
- a Polish restaurant that served great Italian food, and was fun on St. Patrick's day
- a restaurant/bar with a fiercely loyal clientele
- A WINDSOR LOCKS INSTITUTION

The Charles-Ten Restaurant was founded in 1942 and closed in 2016.



- This article presents the intriguing history of the Charles-Ten restaurant using:
- photographs of the Charles-Ten Restaurant,
 - a 1992 column by Jack Redmond about the restaurant,
 - clippings from various newspapers.

This is the history of the entrepreneurship, hard work and tenacity of Charles and Stella Tenerowicz, their daughter, Ann, and their long-time bartender, Brian Rocheleau.

The Charles-Ten Restaurant opened in 1942

Here is the advertisement that appeared in the Springfield Republican newspaper of Friday, March 31, 1942 that announced the opening of the Charles-Ten Restaurant. Below that is a poster announcing the opening of the restaurant.



Springfield Republican, Friday, May 31, 1942



For those who knew the Charles-Ten as a Polish restaurant, it is interesting that both of these initial advertisements focus on seafood, chicken and steak dinners. Nothing succeeds without an initial plan followed by modifications to suit the reality of the day. The restaurant evolved to a focus on Polish and Italian cuisine. It may also have had the smallest kitchen in the history of modern restaurants.

Jack Redmond's 1992 History of the Charles-Ten Restaurant

In the April 24, 1992 issue of the Windsor Locks Journal, Jack Redmond wrote an excellent column about the history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant. It was based on extensive interviews with Ann Tenerowicz, who was the owner and manager of the restaurant at that time. That article hung in a frame on a wall at the restaurant. The entire column is included below. It begins and ends with a row of asterisks.

Cabbages and Kings, Jack Redmond, The Windsor Locks Journal, page 12,
April 24, 1992

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

In 1942, it was Charles and Stella Tenerowicz's restaurant. In 1970, with the death of Charles, it became Stella's.

In 1983, their daughter, Ann, took over the popular "Charles-Ten" restaurant on South Main Street, and it continues today, as one of the town's landmarks and "where everyone knows your name," in the tradition of Charles and Stella Tenerowicz.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of "Charles-Ten" the restaurant built by "family and friends" with hard work and dedication, according to Ann, a local girl, who now operates the eatery and bar, and was gracious to share with us, the history of this family business.

Ann wanted the restaurant to be the focal point of the story, and it certainly deserves the recognition after the faithful years by Charles and Stella, but we should list a few informational notes on Ann, who runs the business, Sunday to Fridays, four to eleven, with Polish food and good cheer its specialty.

Ann attended St. Mary's school and graduated from a local high school, going to Chandler Junior College in Boston.

She stayed on in Boston, taking on a secretary position for seven years.

When her father passed away, her mother wanted Ann to help out with the restaurant just for a year, she said. However, Ann has stayed on the past two decades.

When her mother became ill, Ann took over the operation in 1983, and became the cook and manager.

A Loyal Bartender

Ann has had the same bartender for more than twelve years, Brian Rocheleau. Ann said, "You can set your watch by him." adding "you could also call this restaurant "Brian's Place."

Ann does the cooking. Brian tends the bar, in what Ann calls, "a very unique place." As for steady customers, Ninety percent of the customers are "regulars". Four generations of folks from Windsor Locks have been come to Charles-Ten over the years. Ann admits, I may work an 80-hour week, and if (I have) and free time... I enjoy the movies, live theater and a diner."

Before getting into Ann's descriptive and meaningful history and recollections of the past and present of her restaurant, a few personal observations of this landmark.

The bar: comfortable and sociable with its framed sayings, pennants, and her father's war memorabilia and numerous pictures, the small, but very attractive dining room, with polished oak chairs and tables, two booths, old dresser, pictures and newspaper items on the wall, a letter from Ella Grasso and in a corner of the room, a spiral staircase up to Ann's office.

Noticed an item on the wall that contained an original menu of 1942, with the following prices: Shrimp Cocktail 30 cents, spaghetti and meatballs, 50 cents, Hamburgers 15 cents; Steak Diner for \$1.50 and Beer 10 cents.

Also caught this on the bar wall, "What you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, let it stay here."

A Look Back

But what we saw there, listened to, we could not leave there, and with Ann's blessings, the following are excerpts from her own story of 50 years of Stella's Charles-Ten.

In the 1930s, Charles Tenerowicz started the "Subway" bar in his father's South Street apartment cellar. The clientele grew rapidly, and in 1942, the family and friends built the "Charles-Ten Restaurant."

The building is constructed of three layers of brick, fire-stops 1 1/2 feet apart, steel frame and cellar beams from "Old Hull's Brewery." The family lived in the small apartment above the restaurant.

When the restaurant first opened, it employed two chefs, seven waitresses, with live music for entertainment and the legal drinking age was 21.

At the time, there were few restaurants in Windsor Locks, and the Charles-Ten customers waited in lines extending as far as Dexter Road. As the town grew and more competitive restaurants opened, the Charles-Ten slowly became a "man's" bar.

Ann's father enjoyed television, sports, off color joking, dice, black jack and drinking to the health of his cronies - "NAZDROWIE".

He worked 16 hour days, 7 days a week. He never took a vacation except for one week each summer which he spent at the beach in New London with his family.

The only time he could not be found at the Charles-Ten was when Uncle Sam called for World War Two, and was part of the Normandy invasion. He returned from the war in 1947, with two Purple Hearts and various military decorations.

Bullet wounds to one arm left it without feeling and wounds to his leg left him weak, but he continued his lifestyle right up to his death from cancer in 1970.

Business and Marriage Partners

Ann's mother, was not only Charles' marriage partner, but his business partner as well. She too worked in the restaurant, at first as a waitress and in later years as a cook.

When Ann inherited ownership of the Charles-Ten in 1983, she knew many changes had to be made in order to compete with the large volume of local restaurants.

Her decision was to close for the not so profitable lunch hours, due to antiquated kitchen equipment and limited staff, and spend that time completely renovating each room from top to the bottom, of the entire building.

No major renovation had been done since 1942. She said, "Like my parents I was extremely fortunate to have the dedicated work force of my relatives and close friends to accomplish this task."

"In order not to incur large financial debt in these times of economic uncertainty, I chose the "pay-as-you-go" method. The road has been much longer than expected,

but look back with a great deal of pride in all that my family and I have accomplished with our own hands. They say the 'ole neighborhood tavern' is a dying breed of Americana. "Well, they cant prove it by Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant"

When it came to management style, Ann had this to say about herself, "I'm a combination of both my parents, inherited my father's dry wit, patriotism and dedication to work, and my mother's strict adherence to the laws, good clean family atmosphere and the "the customer isn't always right" attitude.

One Great Lesson

"Unlike my parents, I have learned one great lesson. No business is worth precious family time or personal health. The clientele will always be here, as we can now boast fourth generation customers. So my own retirement is planned far earlier than my parents, while I still have my own good health and to enjoy life's pleasures."

Ann said this year will be completed with a new modernized kitchen, full staff and expanded business hours.

In retrospect, Ann said, "Finally in 1992 will bring Stella's Charles-Ten to full circle once again. How appropriate, the family's 50th year of business."

The Tenerowicz family has made their restaurant a town landmark, and have earned a special place in the history of Windsor Locks."



Ann Tenerowicz and Brian Rocheleau

That concludes Jack Redmond's column, which was published in the April 24, 1992 Windsor Locks Journal.

Jack's column was written when Ann Tenerowicz was the owner/operator of the Charles-Ten. Ann was still the operator/owner when the restaurant closed on Thursday, July 28, 2016. Ann took over in 1983. She ran the restaurant for about 33 years. Her parents had it from 1942 to 1983, which was 41 years. Ann had it almost as long as her parents did. Back in 1988, when Jack wrote the column, Ann said that she wanted to be able to retire "while I still have my own good health and to enjoy life's pleasures". When the restaurant sold in 2016, it had been for sale for years. This fits with what Ann said back in 1988. Ann made her plan come to fruition.

Here are two newspaper clippings about the Charles-Ten restaurants in its earlier years. The first is an ad for a cook that appeared in the June 16, 1946 edition of the Springfield Republican. The second is an article in October 8, 1953 edition of the Springfield Union about a fire at the restaurant.

CHIEF FOR NIGHT work. Good pay. Pleasant surroundings. Steady position. On main highway. Charles-Ten Restaurant, Windsor Locks 749.

Springfield Republican, June 16, 1946

Restaurant Fire Quickly Checked


Windsor Locks, Conn., Oct. 7--
A serious fire at the **Charles-Ten Restaurant** on South Main St., was averted at 11.30 this morning by quick response and effective work of the Fire Department.

In answer to an alarm from Box 6, firemen found the building filled with smoke. Investigation revealed that the fire was caused by blazing grease in the kitchen, but this was quickly extinguished before any fire damage was caused the building. The only damage was to the broiler equipment, and slight smoke damage to the furnishings.

Below is a Feb. 12, 1944 announcement of the restaurant's new Italian chef.

HERB MILLER Proudly Presents
THOMAS SALVATORE
 former head Chef for fifteen years at Ferdinand's
 Italian-American Restaurant in Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Now in the same position at the
CHARLES-TEN Restaurant


Meet
 Our
 Chef



Open until
 1 A. M.
 Sundays
 until
 9 P. M.

Mr. Salvatore invites you to try his Brozzoltti Lasagne and Veal Scallopinni
 We guarantee it's the tastiest Italian dish you ever ate.
 Spaghetti At All Hours, With Clam Sauce, Mushroom Sauce, Marianna Sauce, Meat or Tomato Sauce
 Fried Chicken or Chicken Caciottora All Kinds of Sea Food
 And For A Real Treat Try-Lobster a la Froid-de-ava-EVERY FRIDAY
 We can give quick service for the Business Man or hurry snack with our Noon-day Specials for those who want the best, in
 Pleasant Surroundings. Make it a steady habit at Herb Miller's Charles-Ten Restaurant.
 As Duffy says "Where The Elite Meet To Eat"

We Welcome
 The Public
 To Inspect
 Our Kitchen



Dine In
 A Truly Home
 Atmosphere

CHARLES-TEN RESTAURANT
 Main and South Streets Windsor Locks
 12-2-1944

Below is a portrait of Charles and Stella. Beside it is a photo of Charles' war mementos, including his Purple Hearts and the bullet that was taken from his arm. Charles was a true World War II hero.



Stella and Charles Tenerowitz

Photographs of the Charles-Ten Restaurant

We saw the facade of the restaurant in the photo on the first page. Now let's turn to the interior of the building, where the action took place. Words can describe a place, but only photos can bring it to life. As mentioned above, the regulars at the Charles-Ten called it "Stella's" or "Stella's Charles-Ten",

Some of the photos here are meant to show the rooms. Others are meant to show the people. In the latter case, the names of the people in the photos are included in the captions. I want to thank Michael J. Moriarty, who was a "regular" of Stella's Charles-Ten, for his help in identifying the people in the photos.



Ann in the kitchen



Brian Rocheleau and Customer Jamie McNamara process first credit card at the bar, March 10, 2010





Michael J. Moriarty and Tanya Petrovets



Grandfather Ray "Frenchy" Oulette, Candi Motuzick, granddaughter Olivia Mikan, daughter Beth Motuzick, mother Elaine Mancino. Five generations at the Charles-Ten.



Tommy Mattesen, Ann Tenerowicz, Michael J. Moriarty, Michele Taylor
and 34 year bartender, Brian Rocheleau



The Dining Room


Stella's Wit and Wisdom

Stella's wit, wisdom and philosophy are well stated in the following signs.

* Now Accepting Discover, Visa and Mastercards *

* Ten Dollar Minimum Purchase *

* We Accept Travelers Checks or U.S. Currency *



Stella's
Charles-Ten Restaurant

47 South Main St.
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 623-7449

Exit 42 off Interstate 91
Route 159

Business Conducted
Sunday through Friday 4pm-1am
Food Served 4pm-11pm
Closed Saturdays

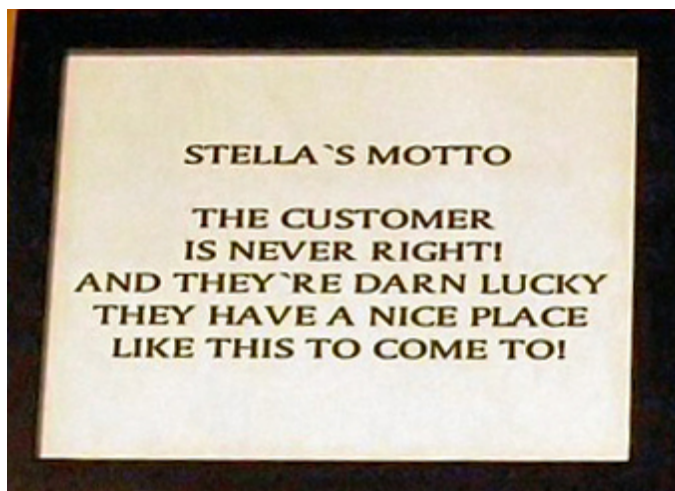
In 1942, along with family and close friends, Stella and Charlie Tenerowicz built this restaurant brick-by-brick. The decor consists of memorabilia collected throughout some ~~Sixty~~ years. From the east to the west coast, various newspaper articles have been written about our cozy tavern, which is now the oldest existing eatery in the town of Windsor Locks.

Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant takes pride in continuing to prepare meals in the traditional form of "home-style" cooking. We do not engage in modern methods of fast foods and microwave ovens. Instead, we cook each order individually in cast iron frying pans, from our own family recipes.

Not only is the food traditional, but our fourth generation clientele is as well. From blue collar workers to the renowned Boston great Carl "Yaz" Yazstrzanski, people from all walks of life have been steadily congregating here with a true feeling of comradeship. We are proud to be a symbol of the "Ol' Neighborhood Tavern," a melting pot of Americana.

Welcome and Na'Zdrowie!

Souvenir Menus Available \$3.00 *Color*



Below the Painting is Stella's motto, followed by the Best Kept Secrets of Windsor Locks.



STELLA'S MOTTO: "Eat before you come here to eat."

...because the wait can be as fast as twenty minutes or as slow as two hours. All cooking is limited to just one small stove. Therefore, to avoid any impatience, if you're in a rush, please ask for the "waiting time" before you order food.

The Best Kept Secrets of Windsor Locks!!

- HOME OF THE LATE ELLA T. GRASSO, THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE UNITED STATES TO BE ELECTED GOVERNOR ON HER OWN!
- HOME OF THE ONLY OPERATING CANAL AND LOCKS IN NEW ENGLAND!
- HOME OF THE ONLY AIR MUSEUM IN NEW ENGLAND!
- HOME OF BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT!
- HOME OF THE DEXTER CORPORATION, THE OLDEST AMERICAN CORPORATION LISTED ON THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE!
- HOME OF HAMILTON STANDARD, THE COMPANY WHERE THE ASTRONAUTS' SPACESUITS ARE MADE!
- AND, THE ONLY TOWN WITH A ONE-SIDED MAIN STREET!
- *Come and bring the Family . . .
Discover even more about Windsor Locks!!*

The Closing of Stella's Charles-Ten in July of 2016

When this chapter was originally written in July of 2016, the Charles-Ten restaurant was for sale. It had been for sale for a long time. As we saw in the column by Jack Redmond, Ann had long wanted to retire while still in her prime. She got her wish. The restaurant was sold, and the last day of operation was Thursday, July 28, 2013. Ann had made known that the restaurant was closing, and the last week of operation was an extended fond farewell. A silent auction was held to sell much of the memorabilia that had been in the restaurant for decades

Below are photos taken in Stella's Charles-Ten in the last two days that it was open.



JoAnne Roache, Anita Bates, Theresa McKeon, Heather Clem, Tracy Dargenio, Mary Ellen Paul, Terrie Becker



Ann with last batch of galumpkis



Brian behind the bar on the last day



Ann on closing day. 7-28-2016



Conclusion

This chapter has been a brief history of Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant. We began with a 1942 advertisement that announced the opening of the restaurant. It focussed on seafood, steaks and chicken dinners. Later we saw how that original focus morphed into a focus on Polish and Italian dinners. We saw newspaper clippings about hiring of a chef in 1944, a night cook in 1946, and a fire in 1953.

Then a photo of a framed newspaper column on a wall of the restaurant, which turned out to be a history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant, was transcribed and included here in its entirety. It was an excellent column by Jack Redmond which had been published in the Windsor Locks Journal. Jack had spent a great deal of time interviewing Ann Tenerowicz, and the result was a very personal account of the history of the restaurant.

To make this historical review more visual and visceral, a number of photos were presented. They were of Charles, Stella, Ann, Brian and their guests in the bar, and in the dining room. We ended with some of the unique wit, wisdom and philosophy of Stella.

Jack Redmond's 1988 article quoted Ann as wanting to retire at an appropriate time in her life. In March 2016, there was a sign in front of the restaurant, showing that the business was up for sale. Ann made good on her promise to herself. She closed the restaurant on July 28, 2016. More power to her for doing that.

The last week of the restaurant was a joyous party. A number of people came down for the last set of galumpkis that Ann made. There was a silent auction and sale of many of the things that were in the restaurant. It was a bittersweet celebration of people and a place that has meant a lot to Windsor Locks from its inception in 1942 to its closing in 2016.

Those of us who are from Windsor Locks owe a large debt of gratitude to Ann and to her parents, Charles and Stella, and to Brian for making the restaurant into a lasting, unique and wonderful Windsor Locks phenomenon.

There is no more fitting way to end this article than to re-use the sentence that Jack Redmond used to end his column on the history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant:

“The Tenerowicz family has made their restaurant a town landmark, and have earned a special place in the history of Windsor Locks.”

Powodzenia Ann i Brian. Niech moc będzie z Tobą.

which is Polish for:

“Good luck to Ann and Brian. May the Force be with you.”

Chapter 10

John Macaluso and His Market

A central feature of the culture of Windsor Locks in the 1900s was the small neighborhood market. Most of these little markets were on or near Main Street. They included: Sisitzky's, Johnny Cappa's, Maria Casinghino's, Bart Preli's, Bert Nussbaum's and Aldo Sartirana's. The fact that these were near Main St. is not surprising. Main Street is where the town of Windsor Locks began. The town expanded from Main Street towards Turnpike Road and Bradley Field in the 1950s. Macaluso's Market was located at 178 Turnpike Road, and it was in operation from 1954 to 1997.

John Macaluso was born in Hartford, Conn. in 1923. He was the son of Damien and Santa (Alberti) Macaluso. He lived most of his life in Windsor Locks, where he was a member of St. Mary's Church, the VFW, the American Legion, and the Knights of Columbus. John was in the Marine Corps during World War II. He married Anna M. (Auretta) Macaluso and they had two sons, John and Thomas.

Macaluso's Market evokes the memory of an earlier era -- one before supermarkets and convenience stores. Its inventory was diverse, from wristwatches to sandwiches to clay pots for plants. His market was well known for its grinders and other lunch specials.

Kelly Savery remembers frequent shopping trips to Macaluso's market, with her father, who used a wheelchair. She remembers that the man behind the counter often gave each of the children a slice of cheese. She also remembers that the folks who worked there actually moved things out of the way so that her father could get his wheelchair where he needed to go. Alfred Bologna's favorite grinder was a combination of sausage, meatballs and sweet onions.

John Macaluso was a butcher, a cook and a businessman. He delivered hamburger and other foods to Windsor Locks schools, and he also catered parties and events. Although no photo of Macaluso's Market could be found, here is a photo/ advertisement that appeared in the Windsor Locks High School's yearbook of the Class of 1969.



Advertisement in
1969 WLHS Yearbook

Local newspapers reported one theft at Macaluso's market. The May 17, 1968 Springfield Union said that three youths were involved in a theft of doughnuts from Macaluso's Market on Turnpike Rd.

In a story on the eve of the closing of the store, John Macaluso said that in the 1950s, Route 75 was a dirt road lined by tobacco fields -- long before the motels and car-rental agencies. He said that back then, Bradley International Airport was more like a country airfield. See the aerial photos of area around his store in 1934 and also in 1990. No aerial photo of that area in 1950 was available.



Area near Macaluso's Market in 1934 and in 1990

During the 1950s, John was a member of "The Windsor Locks Poker Club," which was actually a small group of friends to get together on Thursday evenings to play poker. The members were Joe Raccone, Cappy Raccone, Charlie Alfano, Leo Montemerlo and John Macaluso.

Bert Nussbaum, the owner of Bert's Market, worked at Macaluso's Market between the time he closed Burt's Market on Clay Hill, and the time he opened Bert's Spirit Shoppe on the corner of Turnpike Rd and North Street. After closing his Market in 1997, John Macaluso worked for a while at Roncari's Express Valet Parking.

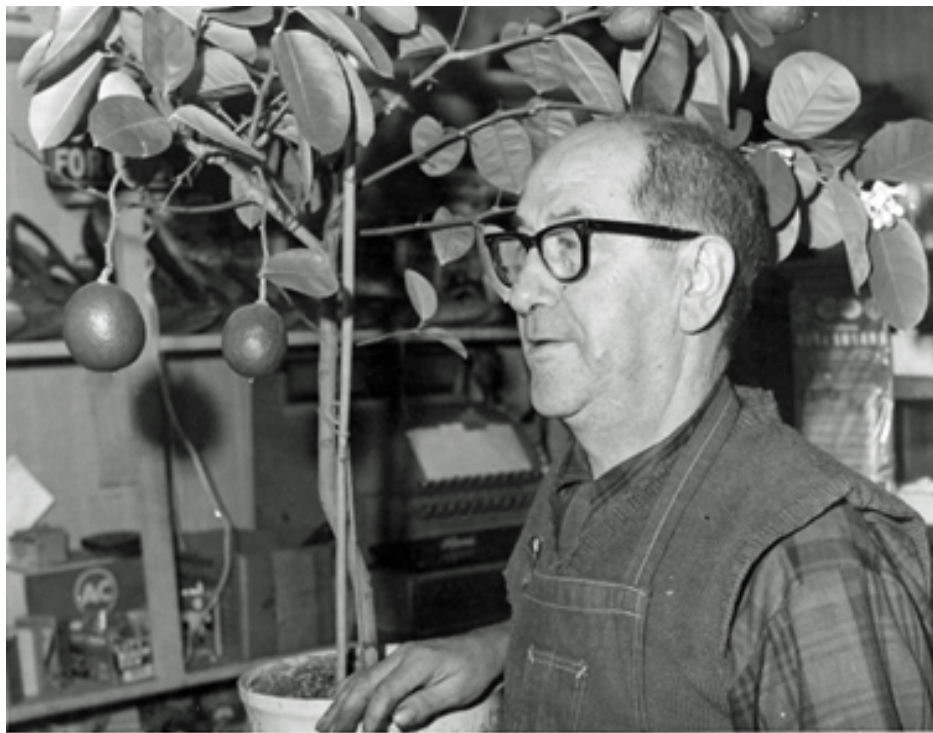
Macaluso's Market, like the other small Markets in Windsor Locks, had a level of personal service which is not matched by today's supermarkets. John Macaluso died on July 8, 2001. His was the last of the old style Windsor Locks markets.

Chapter 11

Tony Basile and his Shoe Repair Shop

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was across the street from St. Mary's Church in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Those were the years before "athletic shoes" such as Nike and Adidas became so popular. The Converse Co. had been making canvas shoes since 1917, but non-leather shoes were a very small percentage of shoes worn when Tony Basile had his shop on Spring St. In those days, men and boys wore leather shoes whose soles and heels had to be replaced when they wore out. Even women's shoes needed to have their heels replaced periodically. Windsor Locks' premier shoe repair store in those days was Tony Basile's shop. It was a different time. It was a time when top craftsmen were considered professionals. Tony Basile was such a man. He took justifiable pride in his work.

Below is a photo of Tony next to his lemon tree. He is wearing his apron. It's the way Tony looked in his shop.



Tony Basile

If you walked out of St. Mary's Church, you saw Tony's Shoe Repair Shop, just off to your right. When you got married at St. Mary's church, snapshots were taken from the steps of the church. Below is a photo of an unknown couple who had just gotten married at St. Mary's Church, followed by a photo of Tony's shop taken from inside of their car as they left the Church.



Unknown couple after wedding at St Mary's church



*Tony Basile's Shoe Repair shop.
Photo taken from car of newly married couple.*

Below is an early photo of the interior of Tony's shop. Tony is on the left. At the right in that photo is Tony DiPinto, who was a friend of Tony's, and who helped out at the store once in a while.



*Interior of Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop.
At left is Tony Basile. At right is Tony Dipinto.*

It was common in the 1930s and 1940s for small businesses to print up advertising items such as calendars and ink blotters. When most people wrote with a fountain pens, everyone used blotters. Now we have ball point pens which eliminate the need for blotters. Tony Basile had the following ink blotter printed up as an advertisement.



Tony Basile's advertising blotter

Tony was born in Springfield, Mass. in 1905. He married Anna Christopher, who was also from Springfield. He opened his shoe repair shop at 29 Spring St. in 1929, and it stayed open for 43 years, until he retired in 1972, three years before he died in 1975.

Tony and Anna had two children, a son named John, and a daughter named Mary Ann. You will see later in one of the newspaper clippings that Mary Ann was a gifted singer, who excelled in high school musical plays.

John married Barbara Ann Perdoni on Nov. 7, 1954. They had a son, John Anthony, who was born on Sept. 15, 1955. He was born in Dallas, Texas, near Arlington, where his parents lived at the time. John Basile was an aeronautical engineer with the Chance Vought Corp.

Tony Basile's daughter, Mary Ann, married Felix N. "Phil" Giannelli on May 4, 1957. Phil had an automotive repair shop at 457 Spring St. Here is a photo of Phil and Mary Ann Giannelli. It was taken sometime during the 1970s.



Phil & Mary Ann Giannelli

Phil and Mary Ann had four children: Cecilia, Peter, Anthony and Anna. They resided at 50 Spring St, next to Mary Ann's mother, Anna.

Phil and Mary Ann's son, Anthony, who was called Tony, married Karen Starr, who is now (2016) with the Windsor Locks Historical Society. Karen is the person who provided the photos of Tony, his shoe repair shop and the ink blotter for this article.

Tony Basile belonged to a number of organizations, as you will see in the newspaper articles which follow. He got his fireman's badge on Oct. 19, 1951. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, of the Italian Fraternal Society of New Britain and of the Senior Citizens Center of Windsor Locks.

What did Tony like to do on his time away from the shop? His daughter, Mary Ann Gianelli recently provided the following information. "He loved to visit his in-laws, the Christopher family, at their family farm in Agawam, MA. He enjoyed gardening, and spending time in his back yard. He took many vacations to Italy. When he was

younger, he played clarinet at the German Club in Broad Brook. That clarinet was passed down to his nephew through marriage, Anthony Campanelli, a life-long musician who recently retired from his position as Music Teacher and Band Director for Somers Middle School, Somers, CT. Tony's father, Nicola Basile, was musically inclined, and was in a band in Italy. There is a long tradition of music in the Basile family."

Part of the research done for this article was a search of newspaper articles in and around Windsor Locks. This search provided a number of articles from the Springfield Union newspaper, dating from 1937 to 1975. The earliest article says that Tony and his wife Anna just returned from a one week automobile trip to Maine, Vermont and Canada in June 1937. There is another article which says that Anthony Basile and his wife went to visit their son, John, in Texas on March 26, 1956. They left from Bradley Field and would stay in Texas for two weeks. Another article from April 18, 1950, said that Tony added a new front porch to his house. Those articles end with his obituary. The Springfield Union newspaper articles are presented in chronological order at the end of this article.

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was a fixture in Windsor Locks for over 40 years. Everybody knew Tony. He wasn't only well known, he was well liked and well respected.

Mr and Mrs **Anthony Basile** and family of Spring street have returned home following a week's automobile trip through Vermont, Maine and points in Canada.

*Springfield Union
June 23, 1937*

Windsor Locks, Conn., April 17—The Zoning Commission has announced that the spring season has given them one of the busiest weeks since its existence with the issuing of the following permits:

Mr. and Mrs. Max Wolnick, Whilton St., dwelling on North Main St.; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rachel, North St., dwelling and garage, Webb and Second Sts.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sheridan, Suffield St., repairing and enclosing side porch at present home; Michael Murkowiez, Old County Rd., dwelling on South Elm St.; Willard E. Sullivan, South Main St., dwelling on Webb St.; **Anthony Basile**, Spring St., addition of front porch and remodel present home; William D. Ranney, Elm St., dwelling on Anthony and Elm Sts.; Aceme Building

Springfield Union, April 18, 1950

Firemen Given Their Badges

Windsor Locks, Conn., Oct. 18—A program at headquarters of the **Windsor Locks** Fire Department, 12 Civil Defense enrollees were presented badges by First Selectman Henry O'Leary, on completion of a course of training as Auxiliary firemen.

At this ceremony, the auxiliary firemen were addressed by Acting Chief C. Harold Wallace, First Selectman O'Leary, Chief Herbert Rockwell of the Bradley Field Fire Department, Richard E. Stanton, local Civil Defense Director, and George D. Clee, assistant.

The following auxiliary firemen received badges: Dominick Ruggiero, Joseph DiPento, **Anthony Basile**, Frank McCann, Harry Preator, Sr., Walter Pohorylo, Nicholas Ruggiero, Raymond Ermellini, Harry Richard, Charles V. McCoy and Oliver Nash.

Springfield Union
Oct. 19, 1951

Miss Perdoni Engaged

Windsor Locks, Conn., Sept. 24—Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St. announce the engagement of their daughter, Barbara Ann, to John P. **Basile**, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church on Nov. 6. Miss Perdoni is a graduate of Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford and St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Hartford. She has a position with the Transocean Air Lines at Bradley Field as a flight nurse. Mr. **Basile** is a graduate of Cathedral High School in Springfield and Indiana Technical College. He is now employed by Chance Vought Co. in Dallas, Tex., as an aeronautical engineer.

Springfield Union
Sept. 25, 1954

Windsor Locks, Conn., June 18—Students of Our Lady of the Angels Academy in Enfield will present "The Singer in Naples," a musical comedy in two acts, at Enfield Town Hall on June 17.

Plays Leading Role

The leading role will be played by Mary Ann **Basile**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., this town. She is a member of the senior class at the Academy, and has a major part in the school's dramatic offering last year.

Other **Windsor Locks** girls in the cast are: Joan Traverso, Rose Borraconi, Patricia Gantley, Jane Pastormerlo, Francis Biardi, Elleen Kabbett, Rena Colo and Carol Tenerowicz. Tickets for the affair are now on sale, the local girls on the ticket committee being Frances Biardi, Carol Tenerowicz and Elaine Quagliaroli.

Springfield Union
June 14, 1952

BARBARA PERDONI WEDS JOHN **BASILE**

Windsor Locks, Conn., Nov. 7—Miss Barbara Ann Perdoni, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Perdoni of Elm St., was united in marriage to John P. **Basile**, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., in St. Mary's Church yesterday morning at 10. Rev. August M. Finnance officiated.

Miss Mary Ann **Basile**, sister of the bridegroom, was maid of honor. Bridesmaids were Miss Ann Marie Raccone, the bride's cousin, and Mrs. Paul R. Ferras of Hartford. Robert Raccone of this town, cousin of the bride, was best man. Ushers were Guy Mercadanti of Agawam and **Anthony Basile** of Bristol, cousins of the bridegroom.

A reception and dinner took place at the Italian Progressive Club on Suffield St. The couple left on a motor trip to Florida and New Orleans, en route to Texas where they will live in Dallas. Mr. **Basile** is an aeronautical engineer for the Chance Vought Corp., there.

Springfield Union
Nov. 8, 1954

SON TO BASILES

Windsor Locks, Conn., Sept. 23-- Mr. and Mrs. John **Basile** of Arlington, Tex., are parents of a son, John **Anthony**, born on September 15 in Dallas. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St., and Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile**. Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., will leave tomorrow from Bradley Field for Texas, where they will spend two weeks with their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John **Basile**.

Springfield Union, March 24, 1956

Engagement Announced

Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. have announced the engagement of their daughter, Mary Ann, to Felix N. Giannelli, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Giannelli of Springfield Gardens, Long Island, N. Y. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church here on Saturday, May 4.

Springfield Union
Jan. 31, 1957

BASILE

In Hartford, Conn., May 19, 1975, **Anthony Basile** of 52 Spring St., **Windsor Locks**; husband of Anna (Christopher) **Basile**; father of John **Basile** and Mrs. Mary Ann Giannelli. The funeral will be Thursday at 8.30 a.m. from the Johnson-Kania funeral home, 105 Oak St., **Windsor Locks**, with a Mass of Christian burial in the Church of St. Mary at 9 a.m. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home today from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Springfield Union
May 21, 1975

Anthony Basile,

**Retired Cobbler,
Dead at 69**

Anthony Basile, 69, of 52 Spring St., **Windsor Locks**, Conn., died Monday in Hartford Hospital. He was born in Springfield and had lived in **Windsor Locks** 45 years.

Mr. **Basile** was the owner and operator of Tony's Shoe Repair Shop in **Windsor Locks** for 43 years until his retirement three years ago.

He was a member of the Church of St. Mary, **Windsor Locks**, the Italian Fraternal Society of New Britain and the Senior Citizens Club of **Windsor Locks**.

He leaves his wife, Anna (Christopher) **Basile**; a son, John **Basile** and a daughter, Mrs. Mary Ann Giannelli, both of **Windsor Locks**; two sisters in Italy and six grandchildren.

The funeral will be Thursday morning from the Johnson-Kania funeral home, Oak Street, **Windsor Locks**, with a liturgy of Christian burial in the Church of St. Mary. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery.

Springfield Union, May 20, 1975



Basile Family Gravestone, St. Mary's Cemetery

Chapter 12

D. F. LaRussa and His Appliance Store: A History

If you lived in Windsor Locks in the 1940-1965 timeframe, you knew the **D.F. LaRussa** appliance store and its proprietor, Don LaRussa. Actually, his name was Dominick J. LaRussa, but, he went by the name of “Don”. Don was an entrepreneur. He opened an appliance at a very opportune time - when television was being introduced to the public. He was not just a businessman. He was president of the Rotary Club, president of the Chamber of Commerce, an active member of the Knights of Columbus, and he was very active in Little League baseball. He was also generous in helping the less fortunate.

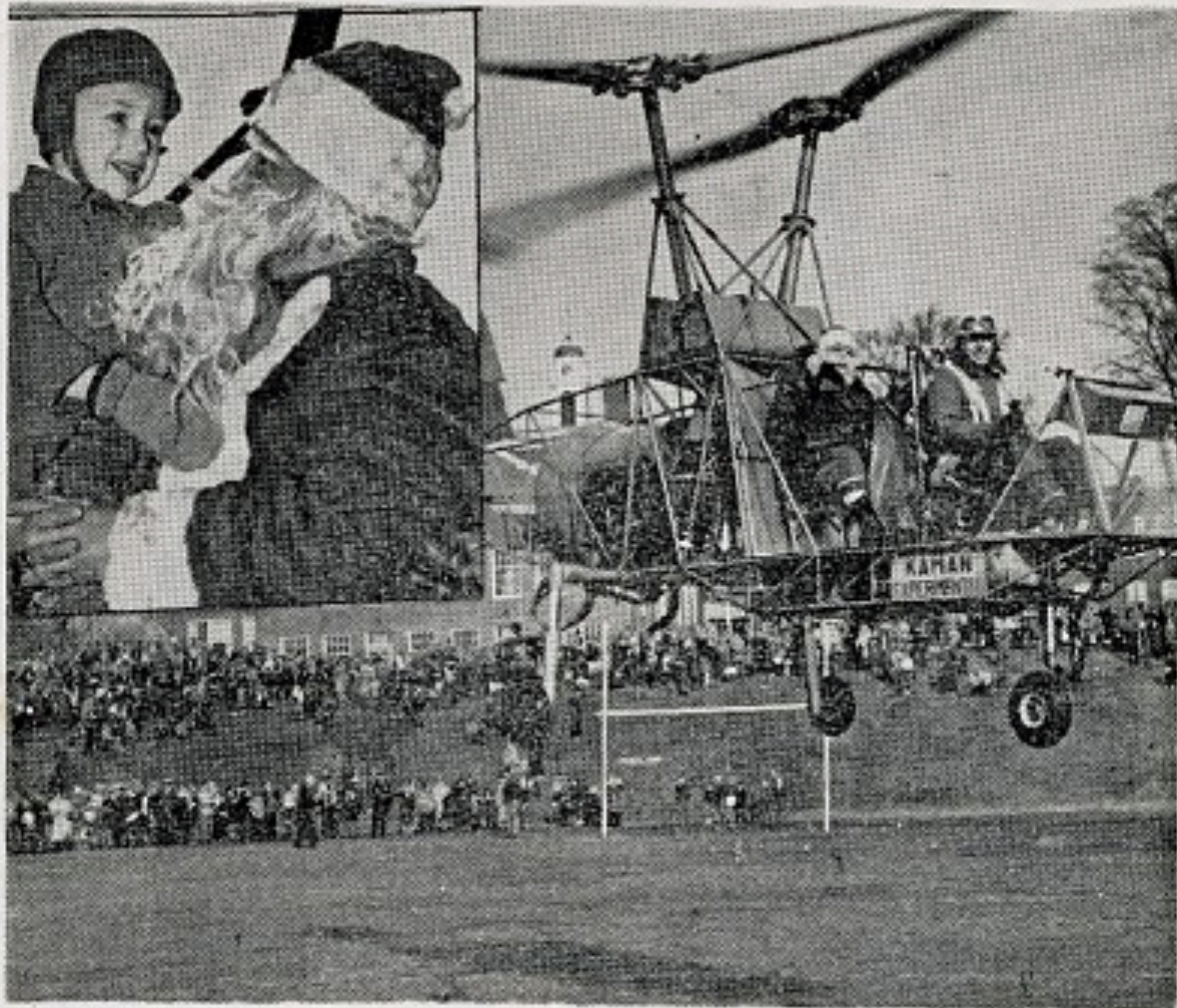
He was born on April 25, 1915, to Anthony and Antonina (Saladino) LaRussa in Birmingham, Alabama. He had six brothers: Angelo, Joseph, Samuel, Philip, James and Thomas. He had two sisters: Mrs Joseph Scavatto and Mrs. Edward Ambrosini. In 1937, he married Dora DeCaro of Thompsonville. They had two sons, Anthony and Raymond.

The First D.F.LaRussa Store

Right after they married, Don and his wife moved to Windsor Locks. From 1936 to 1937, Don was the manager of the Carlisle Hardware store in Windsor Locks. Later, he opened a Western Auto store at the corner of Oak St. and Main St., next to the A&P. In 1947, he replaced his Western Auto store by opening the “**D.F. LaRussa**” appliance store at the same location. Below is a photo of that store.



Santa Claus Rides High



HELICOPTER bearing Santa to Windsor Locks hovers over high school field. Pilot of Kaman ship is William R. Murray. Novel means of transporting St. Nick to town was conceived by D. F. LaRussa, owner of general store, but his son Anthony, 8, really did promoting. Mrs. LaRussa and other son, Raymond, 3, were also among 2,500 who greeted 'copter-minded visitor. Insert, upper left, shows Santa with one of his young welcomers.

Hartford Times, December 4, 1948

Televisions were brand new at the time, and the phenomena of TV caught on quickly. Don's business did very well selling televisions and appliances. Don was an excellent businessman. He knew how to get the public's attention. Shortly after opening his store, he came up with the idea of having Santa Claus fly into Windsor Locks by helicopter, and then going by means of a parade, to his store to distribute presents to the children. The following Hartford Times article describes the event.

Santa Arrives By Helicopter

Special to The Hartford Times

Windsor Locks—About half the town's 5,000 inhabitants, including seemingly all its children, were at the high school field this morning to greet the first Santa ever to arrive in these parts by helicopter.

There to receive the red-frosted visitor officially were First Selectman Henry O'Leary, State Aeronautics Commissioner Dexter D. Coffin, Charles H. Kaman, president of the company which produced Santa's whirling-bladed conveyance, and D. F. LaRussa, the event's sponsor.

Reprinted from
The Hartford Times
of December 4, 1948

BEFORE SETTING the helicopter down, Pilot William R. Murray eased it sideways along the edge of the field so the crowd lining it could get a good look at the airborne St. Nick.

Among the first to reach the side of the craft were two mothers with snowsuits tucked in their arms. The children soon were in the arms of the helicopter's occupants, Murray taking one, Bill Jr., and the man from the North Pole the other. The latter turned out to be 2-year-old Eugene Barberi, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Barberi of Windsor Locks.

The gift-laden fellow with the pilot, Mrs. Barberi softly volunteered, was Master Eugene's "d-a-d-d-y."

* * *

THERE WAS some snap in the air, so the 'copter riders both wore sheepskins. The red in Santa's face wasn't entirely the result of rouging.

The Warehouse Point Fife and Drum Corps led a parade that brought Santa to LaRussa's store, where there were presents for all the boys and girls who tagged along. A fire truck, an ambulance and a balloon vendor gave added color to the celebration.

The Hartford Times article points out that this was an important event. First Selectman Henry O'Leary participated, along with Charles Kaman, owner of the company which produced the helicopter, and Dexter Coffin, who was Connecticut's Aeronautics Commissioner.

The following article from the Dec. 2, 1948 Springfield Union provides details that the Hartford Times article left out. You will see that the helicopter first went to the County Home in Warehouse Point. Each of the children was given a present by Santa. After the helicopter flew to Windsor Locks and landed at the High School's field, there was a parade which went to the D.J. LaRussa store on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. It included the Warehouse Point Fife and Drum Corps.

Santa Claus Coming To Windsor Locks By Helicopter Saturday

Windsor Locks, Dec. 1—Everything is in readiness for Santa Claus' visit to Windsor Locks, via helicopter, Saturday morning at 9.30 at the high school field, when he will be greeted by the youngsters of the community as well as the officials and the Warehouse Point Fire and Drum Corps. After a program at the field, the drum corps will lead the parade to Don LaRussa's store on Main St. where Santa will be a guest for the day to meet the youngsters and present them with a gift.

Before his flying visit to Windsor Locks, Santa will land by helicopter at the Hartford County Home grounds in Warehouse Point at 8.30 and bring presents to the children there.

Springfield Union, Dec. 2, 1949



Following are four photographs of the event, which the citizens of Windsor Locks will never forget. Fred Barberi played the role of Santa Claus.



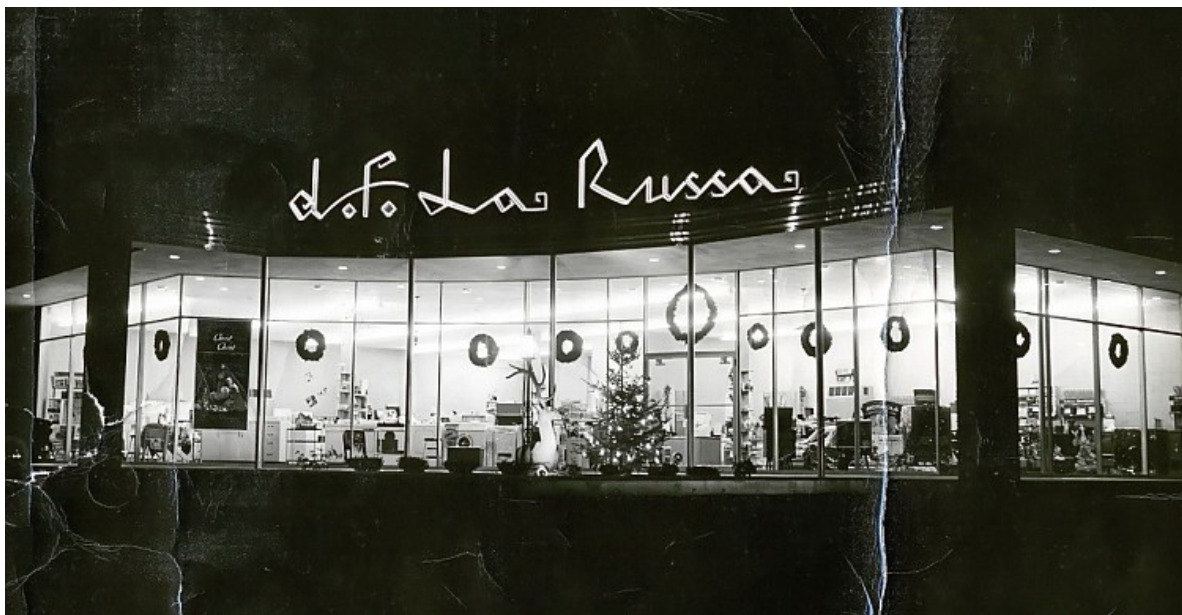


The next photo was taken in the “downstairs” of Don’s store. Don LaRussa is holding the box. Fred Barberi is Santa. The boy and girl are Peter and Patricia Samulrich.



The Second D.F. LaRussa Store

Don’s business thrived at its location at the corner of Oak and Main Streets, but Don wanted to expand his inventory and the types of items he carried. Always an innovator, Don’s new store was the first store in the new Dexter Plaza, which hadn’t yet been built. In the next photo, you can see the Ashmere Inn on the left, the new high school in the back, and the new **D.F. LaRussa** on the lower right. This was in 1958.





Following are two photos of the interior of the new store.



Since 1948 was the initial year of the **D.F.LaRussa** store, the 12th anniversary must have been about 1960. Below is the story of Don's 12th anniversary contest.



Clifford Pierce, a young gentlemen from the County home, is shown as he handed the winning ticket for the 17" table model Westinghouse Television to Dom LaRussa. The winner is Marion Briggs, 11 Bridge St., Warehouse Point. Clifford also drew the name of P. J. Nolan, 66 Spring St., Windsor Locks which entitles Mr. Nolan to a table model Westinghouse radio.

Drawing was held last week for a Westinghouse radio-phonograph and the name drawn by cute little Carol Islieb, also of the County Home, was C. Szymczyk, 14 Ahearn Ave., Windsor Locks.

The “Other” LaRussa Store

Folks who lived in Windsor Locks remember another LaRussa appliance store in Windsor Locks, and there was yet another LaRussa store in Thompsonville. However, there was a difference in ownership. Don’s store could be identified by the sign “**D.F.LaRussa**”. The other store in Windsor Locks and the one in Thompsonville had signs that just said “**LaRussa**”.

The explanation is as follows. Don’s brother, Angelo, opened a TV and appliance store which he named “**LaRussa**” in Thompsonville. Later he opened another store with the same name, in the old F.S. Bidwell building on Main St. in Windsor Locks. Angelo’s store did not have the “D.F” in the name.

Following is a pair of ads is from the 1954 Yellow Pages. You can see the difference in the names, and you can see that Don’s store was still at the corner of Oak and Main Streets, by the fact that the address is 170 Main St.

<p>La Russa APPLIANCE STORE</p> <p>12 PEARL ST., THOMPSONVILLE</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ZENITH• PHILCO• WESTINGHOUSE• MOTOROLA• SYLVANIA• RCA <p>Expert Installing & Repairing</p> <p>TELEVISION SALES & SERVICE THOMPSONVILLE Riverview 5-5595</p>	<p>for TELEVISION in WINDSOR LOCKS Call D. F. LaRussa</p>  <p>SYLVANIA <i>and other popular makes</i> TEL. WINDSOR LOCKS NATIONAL 3-7365 SEE OUR COMPLETE DISPLAY at 170 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS</p>
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1954 Yellow Pages

Below is a photo of Angelo's store in the old F.S.Bidwell building. Look at the sign in the lower right of the photo. It says: "LaRussa", although it is difficult to see here). Angelo's store was two stores north of Wuzzy's (the Marconi Brothers' Luncheonette.)



Don LaRussa's Other Roles

We have seen Don LaRussa's entrepreneurial prowess. Following are some newspaper articles which show Don's involvement and leadership in the Chamber of Commerce, in the Rotary Club, and in Little League baseball. The first two articles are about Rotary Club activities. He later became President of the Rotary Club.

The regular meeting of the Windsor **Locks** Rotary club will be held in the dining hall of St Mary's school Monday, luncheon to be served by the Catholic council at noon. The nominating committee has made the following selections for directors: Arthur G. Bissell, **Don** **LaRussa**, Clemence J. Clark, William W. Prout and Fred S. Bidwell. These directors will present a list of club officers who will take office on July 1.

Springfield Republican, Apr.8.1939

This article shows another Rotary Club activity in which the children from the County Home in Warehouse Point are taken on a trip.

The Suffield and Windsor Locks Rotary Clubs will join forces again this year to take about 95 children from the State Receiving Home in Warehouse Point on the annual outing to Riverside Park and Shady Lake. Committee members from the two clubs are Suffield—H. Clyde Taylor, John D. Casson, Daniel F. Sullivan, Charles Pysz, president; Windsor Locks—Angelo Alfano, Herbert E. Russell, Don LaRussa, Henry Holcomb, Joseph Raccone, president. Plans include a police escorted ride from the Home to Riverside where the children will be given tickets for the various attractions. At 5 p. m. they will go to Shady Lake for a swim and a hot dog roast, returning home by dark.

Springfield Union, July 15, 1956

In the following article, we see Don's involvement with baseball for Windsor Locks youth.

Windsor Locks, Warehouse Point and Suffield Teams Will Participate

Windsor Locks, Conn., Jan. 29—The Windsor Locks Rotary Club will sponsor the Windsor Locks Little League, which promotes baseball activities of boys between 8 and 12, includes the towns of Windsor Locks, Warehouse Point and Suffield, having four teams in the league. Two teams are from this town, as the Lions Club and the Windsor Locks Rotary will each sponsor a team.

The following committee from the three towns has been appointed to complete the arrangements: Warehouse Point, Scott Vining, John Shaughnessy and Albert W. Redway; Suffield, H. Clyde Taylor and Daniel Sullivan; Windsor Locks, Francis Coll, James L. Conley and Don F. LaRussa. The officers of the league are: President, Don LaRussa; vice-president, Francis K. Coll; secretary, Daniel Sullivan; treasurer, James L. Conley.

It is planned to have the baseball field at the public park grounds put in good condition and new uniforms and equipment will be purchased for the boys.

Springfield Union, January 30, 1950

Don LaRussa's Extraordinary Final Business Venture

Don was the first to get involved with Dexter Plaza, which was the first Shopping Center in that entire area of the country. Shopping Centers were a new thing in the United States. Soon Shopping Centers would become a national phenomenon. But in the beginning, that was not obvious. Don's store thrived in Dexter Plaza, but he didn't stop there. He took control of a large retail space next to him. He subdivided the large area, and leased the smaller spaces to tenants which included Roth's Men's Wear, Connecticut Light and Power, Gicones Barber Shop, and Dr. Bacharach, the dentist. This was a brilliant entrepreneurial move. It was not something that he learned from others. He was one of the first to do it in Windsor Locks.

The Passing of Don LaRussa

Don LaRussa was a successful and visionary businessman, a civic minded community leader in the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Knights of Columbus. We have seen his involvement with the County Home in Warehouse Point. He left his mark on Windsor Locks. He was a role model, a man to be emulated.



This is how we remember Don LaRussa.

Unfortunately, Don died much too early, at the age of 49. His obituary, which appeared in the Springfield Union on May 6, 1964, is below.

D. F. LaRussa Dies at 49

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — **Dominick F. LaRussa**, 49, of 119 Elm St., died Monday night in Mercy Hospital, Springfield. He was the owner of D. F. LaRussa furniture and electrical appliance store in Dexter Plaza, and was active in many civic organizations.

Born in Birmingham, Ala., April 25, 1915, son of Anthony and Antoinema (Saladino) LaRussa, he spent his early years in Thompsonville.

From 1936 to 1937 he was manager of the Windsor Locks Carlisle Hardware store. After his marriage in 1937 to the former Dora DeCaro of Thompsonville, he moved to this town and opened his own electrical appli-

ance business on Main St. He later moved the business to Dexter Plaza and added a furniture line.

He was past president of Windsor Locks Rotary Club, past president of Windsor Locks Chamber of Commerce, a member of Riverside Council K. of C. and of St. Mary's Parish. He was also organizer of the Little League baseball in this town.

Besides his wife, he leaves: two sons Anthony J. and Raymond R., both of this town; six brothers, Angelo N., Joseph P., Samuel J., Philip P., and James J., all of Enfield, and Thomas N. of Springfield, Mass.; two sisters, Mrs. Joseph Scavatto and Mrs. Edward Ambrosini, both of Enfield, and two grandchildren. Funeral will be Friday at 8.30 at Thomas W. Johnson funeral home with a solemn requiem mass at 9 in St. Mary's Church.

Burial will be in St. Patrick's New Cemetery, Enfield. Calling hours are tonight from 7 to 9 and Thursday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

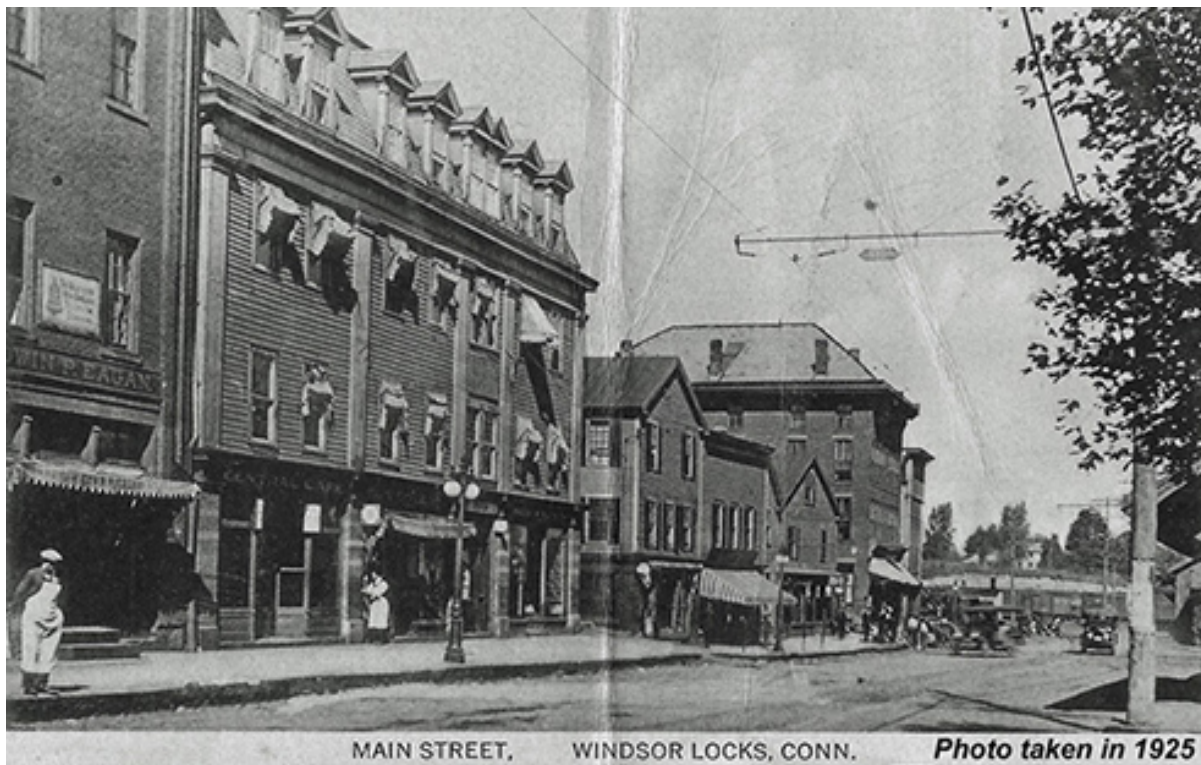
Riverside Council K. of C. will meet at the council home Thursday at 7.30 to take action on his death and to name a delegation to attend the funeral service.

Springfield Union, May 6, 1964

Chapter 13

The Beehive Building

“Beehive Building” was the nickname of a large apartment house at the North corner of Grove and Main Streets. The name gives the impression that the building was shaped like a beehive, but that was not the case. The building got its nickname from the sound that came from the halls of the building. The building was made up of many small apartments. Since there was no air conditioning back then, the doors to the apartments were often open, and it was a crowded building. The sound of much action and much talking caused people to refer to it as the Beehive building. See the photograph below for a view of what the Bee Hive Building looked like in 1925.



Edwin P. Eagan

Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.

Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor

In the photo, the building on the left was Central Hall. The building to the right of that was the Windsor Locks Hotel, which had been purchased in 1917 by Vito Colapietro. The next building to the right was owned by Moses Goldfarb. He had a haberdashery business on the first floor and rental stores on first floor. The top floors

were apartments for rent. Later, Bianchi's Restaurant and Shonty's Bar and Grill were in this building. To the right of Mr. Goldfarb's building was Grove Street.

The building on the North side of Grove Street in the photograph was the Beehive Building. You can recognize the building by the large overhang on its roof, and the three chimneys on the roof. The Beehive Building was owned by Mr. Patrick Shea. In the Springfield newspapers, there were four articles published between 1895 and 1907, which referred to the "Shea Block". However, none referred to it as the Beehive Building. That was a local nickname. The Feb. 22, 1895 issue of the Springfield Republican said that Mr. George N. Kent opened a meat market in January, but it could not meet expenses, so he had to turn over the store's fixtures to Mr. H. L. Handy to settle his bill. The April 10, 1898 issue of the same newspaper described a knife fight between two Italians. One of the men was slightly injured. The other was taken away by the Police. The August 26, 1898 issue of that paper described a "free for all" fight that took place at an Italian christening party after midnight. Several people were severely pummeled. The August 18, 1907 issue of that newspaper said that a fire broke out in the meat market of Pauline Bottasso on the ground floor of the Shea Block.

Between 1895 and 1913, there were two references in the Springfield Republican to Joseph Bottasso's meat market. All of the references to the Shea Block and to the Bottasso meat market mentioned Italians. The inhabitants of the large apartment house were primarily of Italian descent. Mr. Bottasso died on Dec. 21, 1956. He had been a resident of Windsor Locks for 58 years. He was born in Italy on Dec. 27, 1876. He came to the US in 1898.

The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later, this location had Red Leary's hardware store on it, as well as the Mayflower Restaurant, Mac's Package Store and Ray's Lunch. Over the years, those stores changed hands a number of times. When it was the Beehive building, it was a multi-purpose building, with stores on the street floor, and rental apartments on the upper floors.

Michael Shea, a grandson of the owner of the Beehive Building, contacted me early in 2017. He sent information about his grandfather and about the Beehive Building, to add to this chapter. His grandfather's name was Patrick Shea. Michael Shea sent me:

- a genealogy of Patrick Shea and his offspring,
- the death certificate for Patrick Shea, which was signed by Dr. Joseph Coogan,
- the marriage certificate of Patrick Shea and Nora Connors,
- a newspaper article about the death of Patrick Shea,
- some Windsor Locks town documents related to Patrick Shea,
- an advertisement for the Bottasso Meat Market which was on the first floor of the Beehive building, which was the Shea Block.

Patrick Shea was born in 1856 in Ireland. His wife was Nora J. Connors, who was also born in Ireland. Patrick and Nora were married in Massachusetts, February 1896. Patrick died in Windsor Locks on June 15, 1902. According to Patrick's death certificate, he was survived by his wife and five children, and he is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. His wife, Nora, died in MA, 1912.

Here is some information from the newspaper articles that Michael Shea sent. According to the December 17, 1901 issue of the Springfield Republican, Mr. Shea paid \$6000 in tax to the town of Windsor Locks in that year. The June 17, 1902 issue of the

Springfield Republican said that Patrick Shea died in his home on Main Street. The January 27, 1913 issue of the Springfield Republican said that the estate of Patrick Shea paid \$8000 in taxes in that year.

Below is an undated newspaper advertisement of the Bottasso Meat Market that was on the first floor of the Shea Block (The Beehive Building).

Special Prices on Meats
THIS WEEK.

Short Steak,	22c lb.
Sirloin Steak,	20c lb.
Round Steak,	16c lb.
Shoulder Steak,	14c lb.
Fresh Pork,	20c lb.
Fresh Shoulder,	15c lb.
Smoked Shoulder,	12c lb.
Rib Roast,	16c lb.
Bacon,	18c lb.
Leg of Lamb,	16c lb.

Washburn & Crosby's **\$6.50** per bbl.
Gold Medal Flour

Bottasso's Meat Market,
Shea Block, 7 Main Street,
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

**THE MARKET OF QUALITY
AND LOW PRICES.**

JOSEPH BOTTASSO, Proprietor

Bottasso Meat Market was on first floor
of the Beehive Building

The Beehive building is a fascinating piece of Windsor Locks history. It was more difficult to find information about this building than any other building on Main Street. It was an apartment building which mostly housed Italians but it was owned by an Irish couple. That fact speaks well about the immigrants who built Windsor Locks.

Chapter 14

The Rialto Theater

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was owned by Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. We know from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks that Leo Viola had a confectionary store in the Barrett block in 1913. Dominick Alfano had a confectionary store in the same location prior to Leo Viola. According to the October 25, 1922 issue of the Springfield Daily News, they built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people, a stage with an asbestos curtain, a fireproof projection room, concrete floors and stairways, and it was all built to the latest safety standards. It also had two stores to rent on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance. At one point, Swede's Jewelers was in one of the stores and the optometrist, Dr. Gottesman, was in the other. So it was a true multi-purpose building. Below is a photo of the Rialto Theater.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The stage was used for putting on plays and musicals. It was often used for high school plays. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for

RIALTO
THEATRE
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT

Matinee Prices—10-20c Evening Prices—10-25c

MOVING OUT TO-NIGHT—
"THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE"
 With RAMON NOVARRO, JEANETTE MACDONALD
 FRANK MORGAN, CHARLES BUTTERWORTH

SATURDAY—Three Shows: At 2, 6 and 8
 KATHERINE HEPBURN in
"SPITFIRE"
 With ROBERT YOUNG RALPH BELLAMY
 and MARTHA SLEEPER

SUNDAY—Two Shows: At 6 and 8
"THE TRUMPET BLOWS"
 With GEORGE RAFT, ADOLPHE MENJOU
 and FRANCES DRAKE

MONDAY—Matinee at 4; Evening at 8
"ZOO IN BUDAPEST"
 With LORETTA YOUNG and GENE RAYMOND
 Auspices Grace M. E. Church—No Advance in Prices

TUESDAY—One Night Only
"SING AND LIKE IT"
 With ZASU PITTS, PERT KELTON,
 EDWARD EVERETT HORTON

WEDNESDAY—One Night Only—No Advance in Prices
"MAN'S CASTLE"
 With SPENCER TRACY and LORETTA YOUNG
 Auspices Windsor Locks Athletic Association

THURSDAY and FRIDAY—
"NANA"
 With ANNA STEN and PHILIP HOLMES

1934 Advertisement for the
Rialto Theater

RIALTO Theatre
MOVIE GUIDE
 Phone: 229-2 Windsor Locks, Conn. Phone: 229-2

Sun. and Mon. Jan. 28 and 29
 SUNDAY 2 CONTINUOUS — MONDAY 6:15 CONTINUOUS

The Hunchback Loved Her!

—and out of that motivation grew one of the greatest novels ever written. For more than a century it has moved the world's millions. Now it comes to life on the screen in a mighty mobilization of every kind of thrill in the history of the theatre...

CHARLES LAUGHTON
 —VICTOR HUGO'S
HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

with
 SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE
 THOMAS MITCHELL
 MAUREEN O'HARA

MARCH OF TIME CURRENT EVENTS A DUCKING THEY DID GO

1940 Advertisement for the
Rialto Theater

school graduations. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came to the Rialto and led war bond rallies.

According to the October 20, 1929 issue of the Springfield Republican, there were two movie theaters in Windsor Locks. One was the Rialto, and the other was the Palace theater on the North side of Grove St., near Main St. The Palace Theater was previously called the Princess Theater. The owners of the Rialto, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, bought the Palace theater and closed it down in 1927. The reason was that the competition was making it unprofitable for both theaters. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold Lavigne, the husband of Blanche Bianchi, who turned the lower floor of the building into a bowling alley.

In the December 16, 1930 edition of the Springfield Republican, it was reported that there was a hunting accident, and one of the owners, Leo Viola, was shot

accidentally by his hunting partner, Joseph Gatti, who was also his nephew. Mr. Viola died quickly. The coroner was summoned, and he declared it an accidental shooting. Mr. Viola had immigrated here from Italy. He was unmarried. He had become a successful businessman.

According to the Springfield Republican of June 10, 1939, a major renovation of the interior of the theater was done. They installed new spring cushion seats, the latest sound reproduction system and extra thick carpeting in the lobby and aisles to reduce noise, a modern heating system, a complete lighting system, and the walls were modified to decrease unwanted sounds.

The Springfield Union of January 9, 1954, said that the Postmaster, John L. Quagliaroli, was having a new Post Office building built on his property on upper Main St., opposite Leach's coal yard, and that it would be ready for occupancy in April. Mrs. Quagliaroli, the wife of the Postmaster, leased the new building to the Post Office on a long term lease. The Windsor Locks Post Office had been in the Rialto Theater from 1924 to 1954 (Springfield Union, Nov. 2, 1954).

The March 11, 1967 Springfield Republican said that the theater was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. The theater shut down for a while to fix the cornice on top of the three-story structure.

Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. (Springfield Union, July 19, 1973)

Natale Tambussi died in January of 1986 at the age of 77. He started in business with the Windsor Locks Bakery, and later the T&T Tavern. He operated the Rialto Theater, the Windsor Locks Machine Co and the Windsor Locks Lumber Co, from 1947 to 1960.

The owners of the Rialto were:

- Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano - from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930.
- We can assume that Dominick Alfano owned at least part of it until it was sold to Mr. Tambussi in 1947.
- Natale Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960.
- After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford.

We know that all of the businesses on Main St. were demolished in the 1970s for the "re-development". We know from advertisements in the Springfield Union, that the theater was still showing movies as late as March 11, 1967. Mickey Danyluk remembers going to movies at the Rialto as late as 1972 or 1973. The Rialto Theater was demolished about that time, during the redevelopment of Main Street.

Chapter 15

Windsor Locks' Hotel on Main Street:



The Hotel across from the Railroad Station

1861-1970

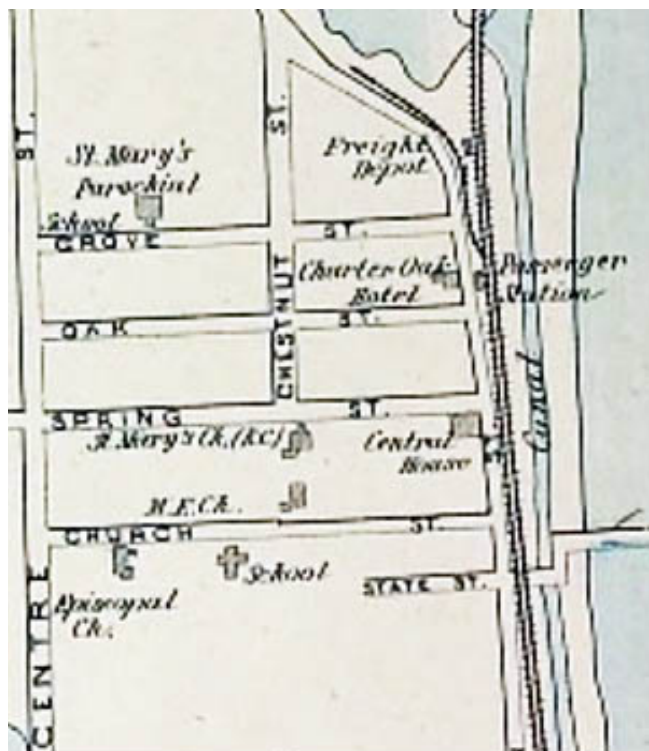
From 1861 to 1969, Windsor Locks had one hotel on Main St. It was in the center of town, across from the Railroad Station. It was there for over a century. It was remodeled in 1913 and it was rebuilt after a fire in 1926. The Railroad Station was built in 1875, so the hotel preceded it by 14 years. Between 1861 and 1969, five men ran this hotel:

1. **Henry Cutler** - opened the **Charter Oak Hotel** in 1861. He operated and owned it until he died in 1900.
2. **Henry L. Cutler** - was the son of Henry Cutler. He took over ownership and management of the Charter Oak Hotel when his father died.
3. **John J. Byrnes** - bought the hotel from Henry L. Cutler in 1913. He changed the name to the **Byrnes Hotel**.
4. **Harry A. Brusie** - leased the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1914, and changed the name to the **Brusie Hotel**.
5. **Vito Colapietro** - bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and changed the name to the **Windsor Locks Hotel**. Informally, it was referred to as "Coly's Hotel". The term "Coly" was an Americanization of the Italian name "Colapietro." The Windsor Locks Hotel burned in 1926, but was rebuilt immediately. It operated until

1969, when Windsor Locks bought the hotel for the redevelopment of Main St. The hotel was demolished in the 1970s. That was the end of the one hotel on Main St.

This paper traces the history of this hotel using newspaper articles and photographs. Try to imagine what things were like at the time they occurred. Today, it is difficult to put yourself in the place of a businessman who has to travel from New Haven to Windsor Locks back in 1860 or 1900. The timeframe of this article is from 1861 to 1970. In the late 1800s, travel was by train or by horse. Even in the early 1900s, small towns were not known for good restaurants and hotels. As a result, travelers often tried to finish their business early in the afternoon, and travel by train to the nearest city for a meal and a hotel room. Windsor Locks was between two cities, Hartford and Springfield, which served this purpose. The five men who ran the hotel on Main Street in Windsor Locks in the 1800s and in the early 1900s sought to change that, by providing a comfortable place to eat and sleep without going to a nearby city. Making a small-town hotel profitable in those times was not an easy task.

The Charter Oak Hotel appears on the 1893 map of Windsor Locks. On the map, it is on Main St., across from the "Passenger Station," and between Grove St. and Oak St.



1913 Map of Windsor Locks

We will now look at the hotel under the four names that it held as it evolved on Main Street, across from the Railroad Station.

- Charter Oak Hotel (1861 -1913)
- Byrnes Hotel (1913 - 1914)
- Hotel Brusie (1914 -1916)
- Windsor Locks Hotel, informally known as Coly's Hotel. (1917 - 1969)

Charter Oak Hotel (1861 - 1913)

A good place to start the history of the Charter Oak Hotel is with a portion of a newspaper article in the Springfield Republican of May 11, 1913. See below. Henry Cutler saw that a hotel had just been built and leased it from the builder. He founded the Charter Oak Hotel. In 1863, he purchased the hotel from the builder.

The Charter Oak hotel stood for more than 50 years as one of the old historic hostelrys of the Connecticut valley. Rarely is there an instance of a hotel holding a continuous record for active service for such a long space of time, and many a traveling man has a warm spot in his heart for it. In 1861 Henry Cutler, the first hotel man of Windsor Locks, leased the property from the builder and started conducting a small hotel under the name of the Charter Oak hotel. For a little over a year the hotel was run under this lease, and then, in 1863, the property was bought outright and the proprietor entered into the hotel business in real earnest. In 1900 Mr. Cutler died, and his son, Henry L. Cutler, succeeded him as proprietor and manager of the hotel. Mr

Springfield Republican
May 11, 1913

Below is a photo of the Charter Oak Hotel. We know that because the street level of the hotel does not yet have storefronts. Those were added by next owner. Notice also the street is not yet paved. One thing in photo's caption needs an explanation. The white overhead sign on two white posts says: "Connelly Stables" (difficult to see in this photo). To get to the stables, you go under that overhead sign, and up the narrow dirt road to the stable.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
 Connolly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
 Charter Oak Hotel -center with Mansard roof & one chimney
 Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
 (Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*

There are many activities that go on at a hotel, including meetings, sales of various commodities, banquets, and renovations. Now we will examine things that happened at the Charter Oak Hotel which were reported in the newspapers. We will take them in chronological order. The first newspaper article referencing the Charter Oak Hotel was on March 28, 1865. E. & W. Hudson, held an auction of furniture and carpets. Taking advantage of the proximity of the hotel to the Railroad station across the street, the company suggests that folks at a distance from Windsor Locks take the train to the auction.

E. & W. HUDSON, Auctioneers.]
LARGE AUCTION SALE
 —OF—
Furniture, Carpets, &c.,
AT WINDSOR LOCKS.
WEDNESDAY, March 29, at 10 o'clock
 We shall sell, at the **Charter Oak Hotel,**
 a very large lot of good Furniture, nearly
 20 Carpets, 20 best Feather Beds and
 Mattresses, Hair Seat Sofa and Chairs, Mirrors, &c.
 A great deal of nice Furniture in the order.
 People can attend this sale by taking
 the train, which arrives at the Locks in half
 an hour. The house is near the depot. **3d. mh 25**
 Hartford Daily Courant, March 28, 1865

In the next article, we that the Charter Oak Hotel was repainted in April 1887.

The Charter Oak hotel is being newly painted.

Springfield Republican, April 7, 1887

The Rod and Gun Club met at the Charter Oak Hotel in April 1887.

The first regular meeting of the newly-organized rod and gun club was held at Charter Oak hotel Wednesday night. The club will have their field day shoot to-morrow.

Springfield Republican, April 29, 1887

In August of 1888, The Charter Oak Hotel had a large addition built on the back of the building.

lect to feed, and there they are speared.—A large addition is being built on the rear of Charter Oak hotel which will give a number of new rooms.

Springfield Republican, Aug. 22, 1886

In October of 1897, a man who was registered at the hotel stole clothing and articles belonging to a number of other guests at the hotel.

A man registered at the Charter Oak house, Windsor Locks, Ct., as Frank Wilson at 2 o'clock and asked to be called at 7 p. m. When the proprietor went to call him he could not be found, and an investigation disclosed the fact that nearly all of the rooms on the two upper floors had been visited and a considerable amount of clothing and articles belonging to the boarders had been stolen. G. S. McAlpine lost a valuable gold-headed cane, a new dress coat and other articles. Henry Cutler, son of the proprietor, lost his two wedding overcoats, which were to be used next week. No estimate of the value of the goods taken can yet be made, as some of the boarders are away and their loss is not known. As soon as the theft was discovered Officer McCarty was notified, and sent an alarm to the police in surrounding cities. "Wilson" was about 22 years old, dressed in a brown suit, and slightly stooped at the shoulders.

Springfield Republican, Oct 19, 1897

In 1900, Henry Cutler, the owner and proprietor of the Charter Oak Hotel, died. Here is an obituary in an undated and unnamed newspaper that was provided to me by a member of the Cutler family. Other sources do confirm that he died in 1900. We see in the article that he had already put his son Henry L. Cutler in charge of the hotel before he died.

RECENT DEATHS.

Henry Cutler.

Henry Cutler, aged 81 years, died at his home on Main street, Windsor Locks, Friday evening at 8:30. Mr. Cutler, who was born in Greenwich, Mass., had been a resident of Windsor Locks for many years, going there in 1866, and entering into the hotel business at the Charter Oak House, of which he continued to be proprietor until a few years ago, when it passed into the hands of his son, Henry. Mr. Cutler was a member of the Congregational Church, and was of a quiet and pleasant disposition, which won for him many friends. The body will be taken to Greenwich, Mass., where his wife is buried.

In May 1900, the Charter Oak Hotel hosted a meeting of stockholders of a company that is planning to build a new distillery in Warehouse Point.

NEW DISTILLERY AT WAREHOUSE POINT.
A meeting of the subscribers to the capital stock of the new distilling company which will be located near the Warehouse Point railroad station was held at the Charter Oak hotel yesterday afternoon.
Springfield Republican, May 11, 1900

In May 1905, Mr. Henry L. Cutler renovated the "sidewalk" in front of his hotel.

H. L. Cutler of the Charter Oak hotel has removed the stone and tar walk before his building and substituted brick. His was by no means the only walk on Main street which was in need of repair, and it is hoped that others will follow his example.

Springfield Republican, May 21, 1905

In 1912, Mr. Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel to Mr. John J. Byrnes. The Nov. 10, 1912 newspaper article below describes the hotel business in Windsor Locks in very bleak terms, in spite of the fact that a buyer has been found who is ready to renovate the hotel and to try to make a success of it. The Cutler family had owned and run the Charter Oak Hotel for almost half a century.

The town is facing the interesting experience of going through practically the first winter in its history with no hotel within its boundaries. The passing of the historic old Charter Oak hotel, which had existed for over half a century on its present location, and in the hands of the same family, is something that will be widely regretted. In the spring it may possibly be fixed up again. In fact, it will be if the intentions of the new owner are carried out, but there are many chances that they never will be, and even if they should there will be many important changes. The Charter Oak hotel was opened at the outbreak of the civil war by Henry Cutler, and it remained in his hands until some time ago, when his death caused it to pass to his son, Henry L. Cutler. As it then stood the hotel could not be put on a paying basis, and the dining-rooms have accordingly been closed. The hotel trade has fallen off considerably of late, and in September

Mr Cutler sold out to John J. Byrnes, who is planning extensive alterations, which will cause the closing of all parts of the hotel during the winter months. It is Mr Byrnes's intention to remove the dining-room to the second floor and turn the vacant space on the ground floor into store and office rooms. An extension will be built to the rear to allow for more room, and the hotel will probably be re-opened as soon as the work is completed, which will not be before spring at the earliest. For some time the hotel business has been a losing proposition in the small towns of New England, as traveling salesmen, who constitute a large part of the trade, prefer to clean up their work in the small town and then take the train to a near-by city to spend the night. Windsor Locks has been especially unfortunate in this respect, being directly on the road between Hartford and Springfield, both of which cities are accessible with only a few minutes ride.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 10, 1912

Henry L. Cutler died in Windsor Locks in 1936. He only ran the Charter Oak Hotel for a few years. The following obituary provides a good deal of information about what he did after selling the hotel.

Windsor Locks, July 29—The funeral of Henry L. Cutler, Sr., who died at his home, 22 Suffolk street, Tuesday evening, will be held Friday afternoon at 2.30. The body is at the Johnson funeral parlors, Oak street, where it will remain until Friday. The services at the home will be conducted by Rev W. J. Maclean, pastor of the Congregational church, and the burial will be in Grove cemetery. Mr Cutler had been unwell the past four or five weeks, but the seriousness of his illness was unknown to his many friends, so that the announcement of his death was a surprise.

He was born in Windsor Locks, a son of the late Henry and Luthera (Towne) Cutler, and he had spent all of his life here. His parents conducted the Charter Oak hotel here

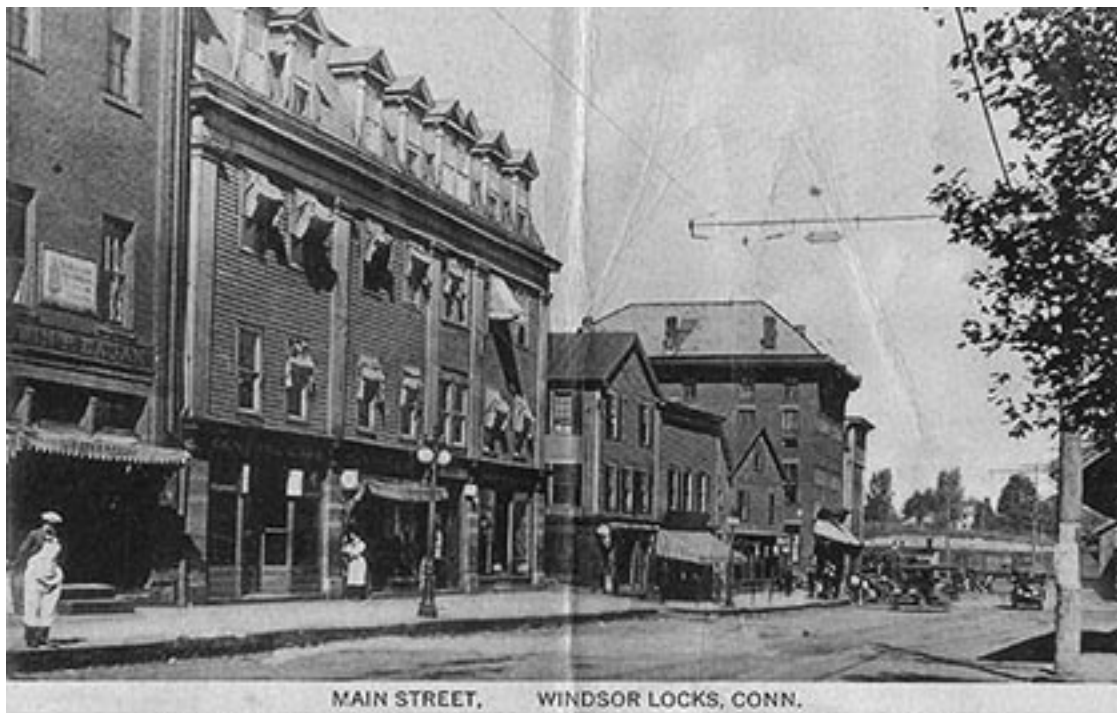
many years and after their death the son took over the management of the hostelry for a few years. He was employed as clerk in the Adams express office here for a while, later going into the automobile business and then becoming an insurance and real estate agent. He was a member of Euclid lodge of Masons in this town, being one of the oldest surviving members, and was also affiliated with the Shriners of Hartford. Besides his widow, Mrs Bessie (Clapp) Cutler, he leaves two sons, Henry L. Jr., and Ellsworth. Mr Cutler served the town as first selectman a few years and also had been a member of the board of education.

Springfield Republican July 30, 1936

Byrnes Hotel (1913 - 1914)

The May 11, 1913 issue of the Springfield Republican had an article on the Byrnes Hotel. The renovations had not yet been completed, and the hotel was not officially open yet. However, a man from Worcester came to Windsor Locks, tired and hungry. He implored Mr. John J. Byrnes to let him into the hotel even though it wasn't officially open. Mr. Byrnes provided the man with a room.

Mr. Byrnes' renovation of the Charter Oak Hotel was a very large project. The Charter Oak Hotel had rooms on the street level. Mr. Byrnes converted the street level to three storefronts, and an entrance to the hotel upstairs. So the front of the hotel looked quite different than it did previously. The photograph of the hotel which was shown earlier in this chapter shows the Charter Oak Hotel which did not have storefronts on the ground floor. The following photo shows the Byrnes Hotel with the three storefronts.



***The Hotel on Main St. across from the Railroad Station
prior to the 1926 fire and re-building
but after 1913 remodelling which made three stores at street level.***

In the previous section, we saw that Mr. Byrnes bought the Charter Oak Hotel in 1912, and was already working on improvements to the hotel. In the June 15, 1913 article which follows, we see that the improvements had been completed and that business has begun. The Windsor Locks Business Men's Association was having a supper and a social.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn., June 14—The Windsor Locks hotel, which was completed only a few days ago, will be christened as Hotel Byrnes Monday evening, by the Windsor Locks Business Men's association at their first supper and social. The speaker will be James P. Woodruff of Litchfield, state building and loan commissioner.

Springfield Union, June 15, 1913

Given that John J. Byrnes only owned his hotel for three years, and that he leased it to Mr. Brusie for two of those years, there is not much to be said about the Byrnes hotel, except that Mr. Byrnes did an exceptional job renovating it. So we shall move on to Mr. Brusie. But first, the following article is Mr. Byrnes' obituary. It provides excellent information on the life of Mr. Byrnes, who was a very accomplished man.

Funeral Rites Tomorrow for John J. Byrnes

The funeral of John J. Byrnes, former hotel man and sportsman and owner of the Byrnes Tap & Grill, Dartmouth street, for the past 10 years, will be held tomorrow, at 9 A.M., at St. Cecilia's Church, Back Bay, with interment in St. Michael's cemetery, Springfield.

Mr. Byrnes, who died Friday night at the Hotel Lenox, where he lived several years, was born in Worcester and started his career in the construction business.

He was superintendent of construction in 1904 of the old street

railway that ran from Springfield to Hartford along both sides of the Connecticut river, and also supervised the construction of the Sage Park trotting track in Windsor, Ct.

As a result of this latter enterprise, he became interested in trotting horses, later becoming well-known in harness circles and owning horses at various times.

In 1913, he went into the hotel business, with the Byrnes Hotel in Windsor Locks, Ct. Three years later, he sold the hotel and entered the wholesale and retail liquor business in Hartford; and from 1928 to 1932 he owned the Bridgeway Hotel in Springfield, and the former Highland Court Hotel in Hartford.

He retired temporarily in 1932, maintaining homes in Stonington, Ct., and Key West, Fla., but returned to active business in 1939, establishing the Byrnes Tap & Grill.

He leaves his wife, Mrs. Katherine I. Byrnes; a brother, Dr. Harry F. Byrnes of Springfield; and four sisters; Mrs. Elizabeth T. Trainor of Boston, Mrs. William F. Donoghue and Mrs. John W. Donoghue, both of Brookline, and Mrs. John J. Ahearn of Springfield.

Boston Herald, Sunday, December 11, 1949

The Hotel Brusie

The December 11, 1949, article at the end of the last section said that Mr. Byrnes bought the hotel in 1913 and sold it in 1916. The man who bought it from Mr. Byrnes was Mr. Vito Colapietro. Given that Mr. Byrnes spent most of the first year of ownership in the massive refurbishment of his hotel, he probably spend less than a year actually managing it before leasing it for about two years to Mr. Harry A. Brusie.

There were only three newspaper articles which mention Mr. Brusie. One of them was his obituary, and the other two are about Vito Colapietro. As a result, this section is very short. Virtually nothing was written about the two years in which he managed the hotel that he leased. We will cover the articles in which he is mentioned in the next section, which is on Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel.

Mr. Brusie's obituary shows that he was a very interesting and colorful man with wide interests. He got into the horse racing business, and was well known in harness racing. There is an error in his obituary. It says that he managed the hotel for ten years. Actually it was less than two years. Here is his obituary.

WINDSOR LOCKS

WELL KNOWN RACING

DRIVER DEAD

Harry A. Brusie Was Former Owner of Hotel Brusie in Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks, Ct., June 17—Harry A. Brusie, 68, former owner of Hotel Brusie in this town, and for many years a veteran harness racing driver in this section of the country, died yesterday morning in a Boston hospital where he had been undergoing treatment the past week.

Mr Brusie was well known throughout the country as a harness racing driver for more than 50 years, but a few years ago when running tracks

began to become popular throughout the East, he became a trainer of runners. During the 1928 season, Mr Brusie held the country win-race record with 51 races to his stable's credit. His sons, Lyman and Kenneth Brusie, are now at Suffolk Downs track in Massachusetts where Lyman trains and Kenneth assists.

For 10 years, Mr Brusie operated the Hotel Brusie here, purchasing same from John J. Byrnes, local sportsman. He sold out his interests here about 15 years ago and took up his residence in Hartford. The hotel is now known as the Windsor Locks hotel and is operated by Vito Colapietro.

Mr Brusie was born in North Egremont, Mass., and his wife died several years ago. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs Helen Blanc of Unionville and Mrs Floyd Huntington of East Hartford; two sons, Lyman and Kenneth Brusie of Boston, a sister, Mrs Kate Robinson of Pittsfield, also seven grandchildren.

Springfield Republican, June 18, 1941

The Windsor Locks Hotel

We know that Vito Colapietro bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and we know that Mr. Byrnes had been leasing it to Mr. Harry A. Brusie. A. Brusie for about two years. See the following newspaper article. It says that Mr. Brusie had terminated the lease with Mr. Byrnes before Vito Colapietro purchased it. This article is about the fire that did significant damage to the hotel in 1926. The article has two errors. It mistakenly refers to Vito Colapietro as "Cino Colapietro," and it used the name "Fred C. Brusie," while we know that this name is Harry A. Brusie. The hotel was closed for renovations when the fire occurred. The fire was due to a stove that was being used for heat. The article also provides information as to how the three stores at the street level of the hotel were being used before it was shut down for renovation.



Springfield Republican, November 24, 1926

There is another source of information about Vito Colapietro's purchase of the hotel. It is an Italian language newspaper. The actual clipping which is shown below does not have a date on it, nor does it give the name of the newspaper. It shows a drawing of the Byrnes Hotel that Vito Colapietro bought, and provides the story in Italian. My translation of the article follows the clipping. This clipping was in Vito's personal belongings when he passed away. While the article does contain some errors, it is nevertheless useful. As you can easily tell, it was a newspaper which was written only for Italian immigrants, and it was very biased toward the activities of those immigrants.

L'Hotel Byrnes in Windsor Locks, Conn.



Connazionali che si fanno onore

L'Hotel Byrnes, già "Charter Oak Hotel", in Main Street, fu venduto Martedì scorso dal proprietario John Byrnes, ora residente in Hartford, al nostro connazionale Vito Colapietro, che possiede lo splendido negozio di frutta situato nell'istesso fabbricato.

L'acquisto rappresenta uno dei più ingenti affari in fatto di proprietà in questo comune.

Il fabbricato si estende per una larghezza di 82 piedi in Main St., di fronte alla stazione ferroviaria ed occupa uno dei punti più ricercati della città.

L'Hotel per sé stesso è una delle istituzioni più antiche della città essendo stato condotto per molti anni dal fu Henry Cutler e da sua moglie che si dedicarono con passione a perfezionare uno stabilimento che doveva rispondere alle esigenze moderne. Passato nelle mani del figlio, questi vendé l'Hotel 5 anni or sono a Mr. Byrnes il quale in questo periodo fece molti utili cambiamenti sia nell'interno che all'esterno della proprietà, ottenendo così

tre nuovi grandi vani nel pianterreno ed il completo rinnovamento dei tre piani superiori, dalla cima al fondo.



Vito Colapietro

Il nuovo proprietario dell'Hotel Byrnes

Nel dicembre ultimo Mr. Byrnes cedette il far appartenente al fabbricato ad Harry A. Brusio di Hartford e gli dette anche in fitto l'Hotel per un periodo di anni.

Ora M. Byrnes ha venduta la intera proprietà al signor Vito

Colapietro, ritirandosi definitivamente dagli affari.

Il signor Colapietro non farà alcun cambiamento nella gestione dell'Hotel, che rimarrà ancora in affitto a Mr. Brusio, come indisturbato rimarrà Charles Colli nella gestione del suo Caffè Centrale nel medesimo fabbricato, e lo stabile rappresenterà per il nuovo proprietario un semplice investimento di capitali.

...

Vito Colapietro emigrò in America nel 1904, stabilendosi in Windsor Locks, Conn., ove fino ad oggi ha trascorso una vita laboriosa ed onesta.

Ammogliato nel 1910 la sua casa è ora rallegrata dalla consorte Annina e dai due figliuoli Antonio ed Angelo, che formano la sua felicità.

Al nostro connazionale Vito Colapietro che tanto bene ha saputo trarre profitto dalle opportunità che offre questo Paese, v. dano le nostre felicitazioni, con gli auguri del più roseo e prospero avvenire.

*Article in Italian American Newspaper on
L'Hotel Byrnes in Windsor Locks, Conn.*

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The Hotel Byrnes, formerly known as the Charter Oak Hotel on Main Street, was sold last Tuesday by the owner, John Byrnes, today a resident of Hartford, to our countryman, Vito Colapietro, who possesses the splendid fruit store in the same building.

The acquisition represents one of the largest business transactions of ownership in this town.

The building extends the width of 82 feet on Main Street, across from the train station, and it occupies one of the most visited places in the town.

The Hotel is one of the oldest buildings in the town, having been run by the deceased Henry Cutler and his wife who were passionately dedicated to the perfection of an establishment which must respond to modern requirements. Having passed through the hands of a son, the hotel was sold five years ago to Mr. Byrnes. In this period, he made many useful changes, both internal and external to the property, resulting in four new large rooms on the ground floor and a complete renovation of the three upper floors, from the top to the bottom.

In December, Mr. Byrnes ceded the bar connected to the hotel to Harry A. Brusie of Hartford, and rented the Hotel to him for a period of years.

Today, Mr. Byrnes has sold the whole property to Mr. Vito Colapietro, retiring definitely from business affairs.

Mr. Colapietro will not make other management changes to the hotel, which will remain in rent to Mr. Brusie, and Charles Colli will remain undisturbed in the financial management of his "Caffe Centrale" in the same building, and this represents the stability of the new proprietor in a simple investment of capital.

Vito Colapietro emigrated to America in 1904, settling in Windsor Locks, CT, and has lived a life which is filled with labor and honesty.

He was married in 1910 and his house is now cheered up by his wife, Anna and by two little children, Antonio and Angelo, who constitute his happiness.

To our countryman, Vito Colapietro who has taken the opportunity for profit, which our Country offers, we give him our best wishes for prosperity.

While this newspaper article does not have the date on it, we have the information to estimate about when it was published. For example, the article says that Vito bought the hotel "last Tuesday," and the obituary of John J. Byrnes in the Boston Herald of Dec. 11, 1949, says that Mr. Byrnes sold the hotel in 1916. Therefore the article must have been written in 1916.

Vito Colapietro arrived in the United States in 1904. He came from Turi, Italy, a very small town south of Bari, in southern Italy. He worked for his brother, Pasquale Colapietro, who went by the Americanized name of "Patsy Coly". Patsy had confectionery store on Main Street which had one of Windsor Locks' early ice cream counters. Vito also worked on the Bridge to Warehouse Point. While working on the bridge, he fell off, and was rescued by a man in a boat. Later, when Vito owned his own store on the ground floor of his hotel, the man who rescued him sometimes stopped in. Vito never let the man pay for anything.

Vito returned to Turi, Italy in about 1909, and married Anna Lefemine. Vito and Anna returned to Windsor Locks in 1910. On his second arrival, Vito was 27 years old. Below are portraits of Anna and Vito Colapietro in 1913.



Anna (Lefemine) Colapietro, 1913



Vito Nicola Colapietro, 1913

Vito and Anna first lived in a white house on Oak St, near Center Street. Vito's hotel did well. However, a fire occurred in 1926, which happened while the hotel was shut down for some restoration. Undaunted, Vito got a loan to rebuild. After the fire, he redesigned the hotel, keeping the street level the same, with three stores and an entrance to the hotel, just as John J. Byrnes did. He also extended the rear of the hotel in order to add more rooms, and he built an apartment for his family on the first floor.

He also added a steel fire escape on the back of the hotel. Below is a photo of the hotel before the 1926 fire.



MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.
*The Hotel on Main St. across from the Railroad Station
prior to the 1926 fire and re-building
but after 1913 remodelling which made three stores at street level.*

Below is a Jan. 2, 1917 article describing the rebuilding of the hotel, followed by a photo of the hotel after the redesign and reconstruction. Notice that the main differences in the facade of the building are that the Mansard roof is gone, and the wood exterior was replaced by more modern stucco walls.

The rebuilding of the burned hotel property is being rushed along and the remodelled building will be somewhat changed in its appearance on the upper stories. There will be three floors on top of the stores on the street level, part of which will be occupied by the owner, Vito Colapietro with his family, and the balance will be adapted for hotel purposes. The place on the ground floor that has been used as a restaurant will be occupied by the owner with his fruit and other business. Part of the second floor will be changed in the location of the rooms used as the dining hall and other purposes and the chambers on the upper floors will be laid out according to a better plan than formerly, with halls running lengthwise from the staircases and an iron fire escape staircase on the outside at the rear of the building.

Springfield Republican, January 2, 1927



***1927 advertising photo of Windsor Locks Hotel,
After the 1926 fire and the 1927 reconstruction***

Look closely at the above photo of the hotel. The room at the near corner of the first floor was the family's dining room. Going along the side (up the driveway) were their kitchen and three bedrooms. Going left from the front corner on the first floor was their dining room, parlor, and a very large room that they called "The Big Dining Room". After the reconstruction in 1927, that room was the hotel's dining room. Behind that room were two apartments. Below is a photo of the Colapietro family and friends celebrating Christmas in 1938 in the "Big Dining Room".



***Colapietro family's 1938 Christmas dinner
in their apartment's "Big Dining Room"***

Look back at the photo of the hotel on the previous page. There is a driveway on the right side of the building which leads to the parking lot behind the hotel. Vito's store, from which he ran the hotel, was at the near corner of the hotel on the Street level.

Directly behind that corner store was a room with a large, heavy door. The room housed a large wine press, which could be operated by two men. There were also a number of large wooden barrels which were used to store the wine. Vito made wine once a year, which was the family supply for the year. Outside of the family, few people knew of that room. Below is a photo of Leo Montemerlo and Tony Colapietro moving a wine barrel behind the hotel.



*Leo Montemerlo and Tony Colapietro
moving wine barrel behind hotel, 1940*

The place where Leo and Tony are rolling the wine barrel was directly behind the hotel, under a grape arbor. It was where Vito Colapietro's car was parked. Vito and his wife, Anna, never drove the car, but the rest of the family did. Below is a photo of Vito's first car.

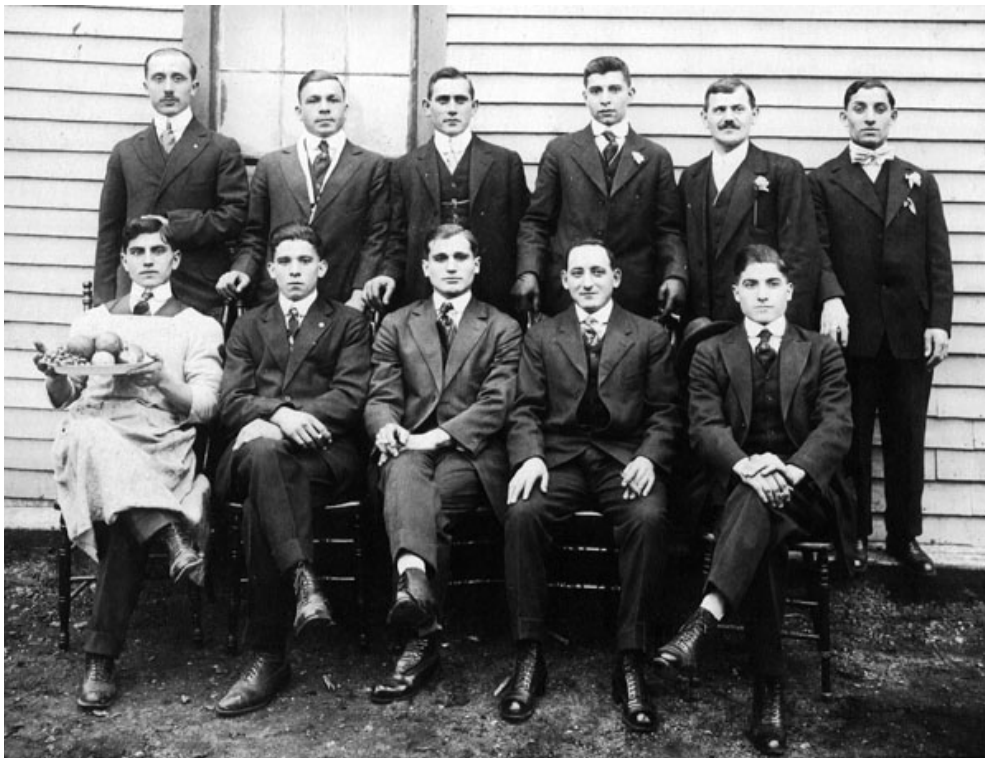


*Vito Colapietro's first car, "The Blue Eagle, a 1929 Hudson.
All of his license plates after that were "VC 29"*

The upper two floors of the hotel were all hotel rooms. During of the time that Vito Colapietro owned the hotel, it was for working men. Some stayed for weeks, others for months while they worked on local projects. Some lived there for decades. One of the “permanent guests” was Dave Magliora, who was the manager of the Rialto Theater. One of the families that lived in an apartment on the first floor was the Samulrich family. They had two children, Peter and Patricia. The two apartments on the first floor had their own facilities. During WWII, many of the hotel guests were military.

This was not a fancy or a modern hotel. It was an old-fashioned hotel. Today it would be an anachronism. Each room had a sink, but the showers and bathroom were in a single large room, which was for use by everyone living on that floor. Back in those days, people who travelled for business, or who worked at a distance from home, were men, not women. Times have changed.

My grandmother, Anna Colapietro once said, “If we had a nickel for every dollar we gave to help other people, we’d be rich.” I asked her what she meant. Italian immigrants, at that time, helped their siblings in Italy come to the US. When they got here, they gave them jobs if they could. They helped family members and friends start businesses. These were not really loans, and were rarely repaid. Once your business was set up, you were expected to help others get started. Here is a photo of Vito Colapietro as a young man in Windsor Locks, with some of his friends who were trying to get started in Windsor Locks and in other nearby towns. They are all Italian.



*Back: Joe Natale, Biaggio Cozzolino, John Gasparro, Leo Lefemine, Vito Colapietro, Tonino Bellini
Front: Giovanni Valentino, Raffaele Lefemine, Raffaele Iacovazzi, Nick Bellini, Nick Divenere*

The whole time that Vito Colapietro owned the hotel, he also ran a store on the Main Street level of the hotel. That was where the guests of the hotel came to pay their bills. Vito's store changed many times between 1917 and 1969. Vito leased a store from John J. Byrnes for a while before he bought the building from Mr. Byrnes. Here is a photo of Vito in his store in 1917, the year that he bought the hotel. That store was a "confectionery store" (Ice cream, candy, cigarettes, and miscellaneous goods.)



Vito Colapietro's Candy Store 1917

By 1933, Vito had turned it into a beer tavern. He could not serve hard liquor.



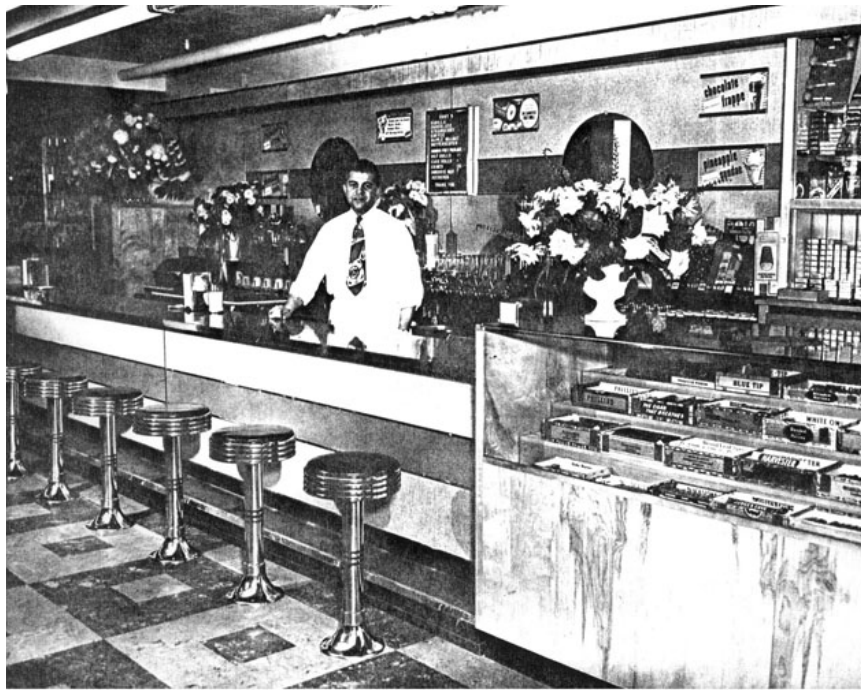
Vito Colapietro's Beer Tavern 1933

By 1941, the store returned to being a confectionary shop. In the next photo, Leo Montemerlo is seen in front of the store. He had just married Vito Colapietro's daughter, Lena, and he worked in the store each evening, after working in a mill by canal during the day. Leo and Lena were living at the hotel at that time.



*Leo Montemerlo 1941
Soda Shop, Coly's Hotel, Windsor Locks, CT*

When World War II was over, Vito's son, Tony returned to Windsor Locks, and he worked in the store. He took over management of the store in 1950. It was called Tony's Soda Shoppe. Vito continued to work in the store every day. He continued to run his hotel's business from that store. Below are photos of Tony and of his father, Vito Colapietro at the grand opening of the store.



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950



Vito Colapietro, Tony's Soda Shop, 1950

Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel served him and his family well. Vito and Anna had five children. He put them all through college. Four of them went on marry and have families. One remained single and stayed to work in the hotel. Here is a photo of Vito and Anna, their children and grandchildren, at their 50th wedding anniversary.

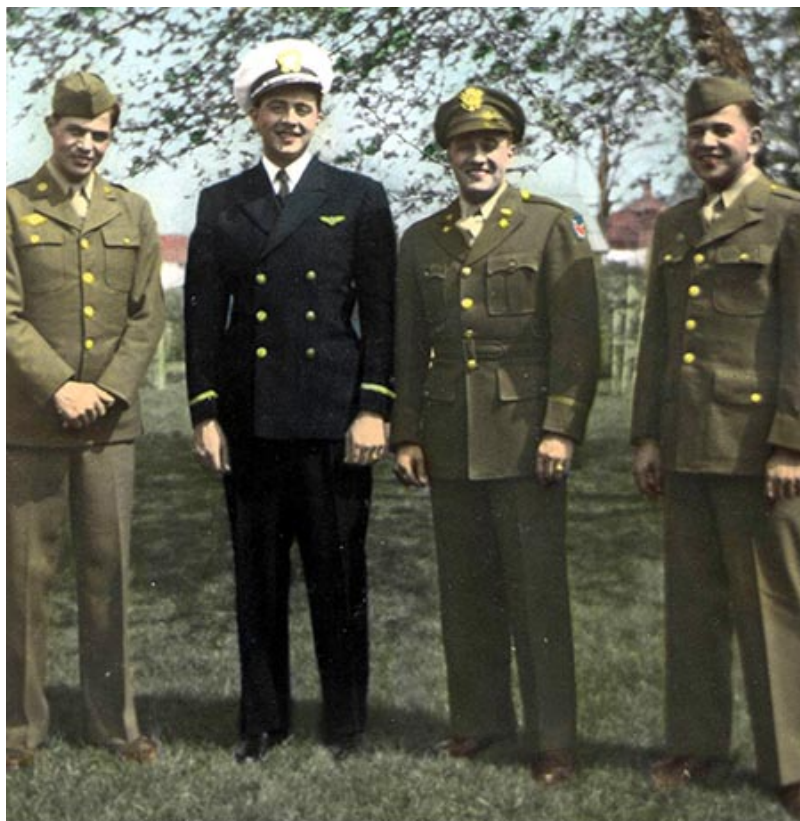


*Pete, Leo, John, Anna Marie, John, Mary Anne, Mel, Angelo, Tony
Jean, Lena, Anna, Vito, Andrea, Lenny, Vito, Veronica, Milly
Jill, Jodie, Joe, Vincent, Anthony
50th Anniversary of Vito & Anna Colapietro, Oct. 3, 1960*

The story of the Hotel is not only a story of the building, but of the businesses it held, and the people who owned and operated the hotel. That is the reason for this brief look at the family of Vito Colapietro. Vito was a member of St. Mary's Church, a member of the Knights of Columbus, and he was President of the St. Oronzo Society. He was a family man. He delighted in his children and grandchildren. I was his oldest grandchild. While born in Italy, Vito Colapietro was a true American. He and his wife sent four sons serve in World War II. Below are photos of Vito and Anna's five children: (Angelo, Tony, John, Pete and Lena), and a photo of their four sons in World War II. This hotel was their home.



*Angelo, John, Pete, Tony
Lena, Vito & Anna Colapietro 1951*



John, Pete, Angelo & Tony Colapietro

All good things must come to an end. When the town of Windsor Locks decided to re-develop Main St, all of the stores, including the Windsor Locks Hotel had to be sold to the town so that they could be torn down. That process took a few years. During that time, Main Street was a sad sight. Below is a photo of Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks hotel in 1970.



Windsor Locks Hotel, after being sold to the town for Main St. redevelopment. Shut down-1969. Torn down-1971, Replaced by a CVS & a Dunkin Donut

To summarize: Vito Colapietro came to the United States in 1906. He had no money and couldn't speak English. He worked two jobs, and in a few years went back to Italy and married Anna Lefemine. In 1910, he returned to Windsor Locks with his wife. In 1917, he bought the Byrnes Hotel. He made it successful. He and his wife raised a family of five. He was one of many immigrants from Europe who came to Windsor Locks and became entrepreneurs, started businesses, raised families, and set a good example for their children and grandchildren. He left his mark on Windsor Locks, and it was a good mark.

On June 17, 1972, Vito Colapietro passed away. He had successfully kept his hotel going as long as possible. He had run it successfully for a half a century, as did Henry Cutler, who was the first owner of the hotel on Main Street which was across from the railway station.

Conclusion

Back in the 1860s, the Civil War was starting, but Windsor Locks was in a growth mode. Factories were being built along the canal. In 1875, the Railroad Station was build on Main St. Henry Cutler saw the opportunity for growth in this community which

sat between Springfield and Hartford, and he started the Charter Oak Hotel in 1861. Someone else built the hotel. He leased it for a year, and then bought it outright.

With the mills, the canal traffic, and the railroad, business grew. The big influx of European immigrants to Windsor Locks from the 1880s through the 1920s made Windsor Locks a boom town. An entrepreneurial spirit imbued the town. These new immigrants started and built businesses along the Main St. Those who had already been there for a while, and had accumulated some wealth built large buildings called "Blocks" on Main St, such as the Burnap Block next to the Charter Oak Hotel. These "blocks" became centers of commerce and of social life.

Main Street was a bustling center of activity. The idea of a hotel in the middle of this bustling town turned out to be a good idea, and Henry Cutler's investment turned out to be a wise one. Henry died in 1900 and his son, Henry L. Cutler took over. But a change was occurring. Businessmen coming to small towns like Windsor Locks were tending to finish their business early in the afternoon and go to cities like Hartford and Springfield to get a good meal at a restaurant and to find a good hotel for the night. Hotel business fell off in small towns.

Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel that his father had started to John J. Byrnes, who refurbished the Charter Oak Hotel, and changed the name to the Byrnes Hotel. Soon he leased it to Harry A. Brusie, who called it the Hotel Brusie. In 1916, only three years after he bought the hotel, Mr. Byrnes sold his hotel to Vito Colapietro, an Italian immigrant who had arrived in Windsor Locks in 1906. When Vito bought the hotel, he had been leasing a confectionary store in the hotel.

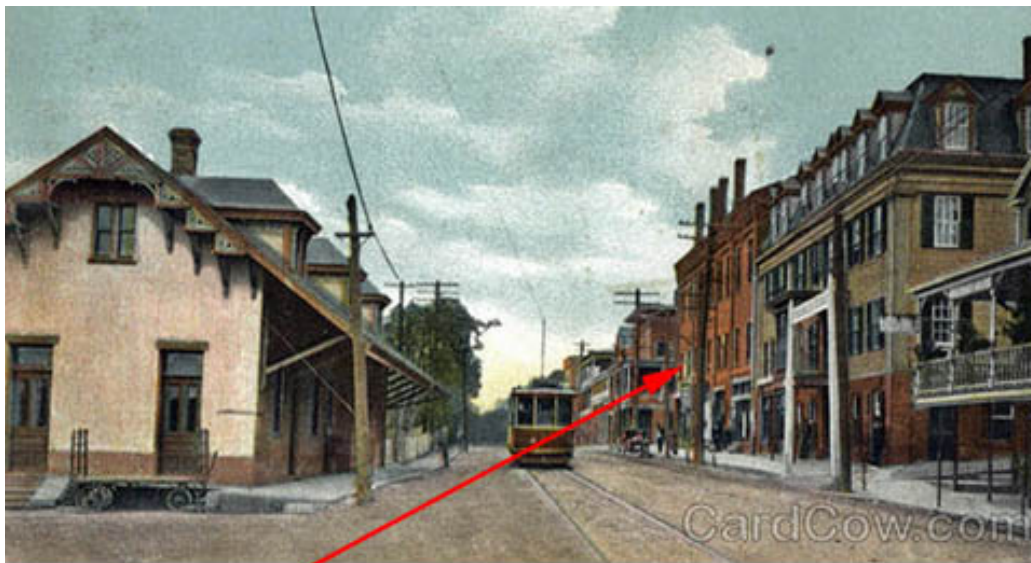
In 1926, about a decade after he bought the hotel, Vito Colapietro decided to refurbish the hotel again. While the hotel was shut down for this work, a fire did massive damage to the hotel. Mr. Colapietro redesigned, expanded and rebuilt the hotel, which remained a mainstay of downtown Windsor Locks until the town decided to "re-develop" Main St. All of the businesses on Main St., including Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel, had to be sold to the town so that they could be torn down. There were many trends in Windsor Locks which led to the decision to redevelop Main St. The fortunes of the mills along the canal declined over the years. Most shut their doors. The canal lost its influence in commerce. The railroad was losing its influence. The population of Windsor Locks was not growing as it had with the influx of immigrants. Business growth changed from mills along the river and small businesses along Main St. to the growth of large, high-technology aerospace firms near Bradley Field. The nature of Windsor Locks had changed from a mill town, fostered by the river, the railroad, and the canal, into town whose residents mostly worked elsewhere.

The Hotel across from the Railroad Station was no longer needed in the new Windsor Locks. Hotels owned by hotel chains were built on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Turnpike), to take care of Bradley Field passenger business and of the needs of the aerospace companies in the Bradley Field area.

Chapter 16

Burnap Block and Central Hall

A fascinating building existed at the North corner of Oak and Main Streets from 1863 to 1936. It extended from Oak Street to Coly's Hotel. The building went through two owners in that time. From 1865 to 1918, it was owned by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap, and was known as the "Burnap Block". From 1918 to 1938, it was owned by Charles Colli, and was known as the "Central Hall Block". Below is a photo of that three-story brick building which had four storefronts on Main Street. The arrow points to the Burnap Block, which is brick building with the chimneys on top.



Burnap's Block is red brick building with chimneys to the left of Coly's Hotel, about 1920

What made that building so fascinating? It was the center of Windsor Locks social life, sporting events, and business. It housed a large room whose floor was built over steel springs, which were installed to enhance the experience of dancing and of playing sports, such as basketball. It was known as one of the best dance halls in the area. That same room was also used for operas, movies, theatrical shows, musicals, large meetings, basketball games and boxing matches. When this building was the Burnap Block, this room was called "The Burnap Opera House". When the building changed hands, that room became known as "Central Hall".

This building contained many small businesses such as Garbarino's Market, Outerson's mens furnishings shop, Carroll's millenary shop, a Polish rooming house, and large businesses such as the telephone and telegraph companies, and the Windsor Locks Journal.

This chapter describes the history of this building throughout its life as the Burnap Block and later as Central Hall. This history is presented by means of photographs and 38 newspaper articles. All 38 articles are included here. The articles are short and easy to read. Also,

including them here gives the reader easy access to these sources. Reading those articles that were written in the 1800s and early 1900s is fun as well as rewarding.

Here is a brief history of Burnap Block / Central Hall building:

- It was built in 1863 by Fred Abbe.
- It was bought in about 1865 by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap of Windsor Locks, and was known during his ownership as the Burnap Block.
- It was bought by Charles Colli in 1918, and it was known as Central Hall during his ownership.
- It was bought by Graziano Graziani in 1938, and torn down to make a one story building which housed the A&P and another store.
- The A&P shut down in the late 1960s, when the Windsor Locks government forcibly bought all of the shops on Main St for it's re-development program. Under that program, the building was demolished in the 1970s.

This Chapter is organized as follows:

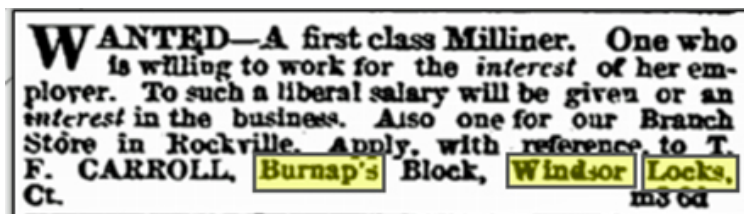
- Section 1 - the Burnap Block
- Section 2 - Central Hall Block
- Section 3 - A&P building
- Section 4 - Conclusions

Section 1 - The Burnap Block (1865 - 1918)

This section covers the period after Dr. Burnap bought the building from Fred Abbe in about 1865, to when his estate sold the building to Charles Colli in 1918. Let's look at what clippings from three Springfield newspapers (the Republican, the Union, and the Daily News) tell us about the Burnap Block during that time.

An April 30, 1955 article in the Springfield Union said that the Windsor Locks Journal moved to the second floor of the Burnap Building in 1886. In 1896, the Journal was sold to a new owner, and the printing operation was moved from the Burnap Building to the George P. Clark Co building on the banks of the canal.

The first newspaper references to the Burnap Building were in 1870. The first was an advertisement by T.F. Carroll's Millinery store, for a "first class Milliner".



Springfield Republican, March 3, 1870

On June 18, 1870, Mr. Carroll ran an ad saying he wanted to buy a second-hand, medium size, fireproof safe.

WANTED—A second hand. medium size, fire-proof SAFE. Address, stating size, make and price. THOS F. CARROLL, **Burnap's** Block, **Windsor Locks, Conn.** je16 3d

Springfield Republican, June 18, 1870

In 1873, the Windsor Locks news section of the newspaper included the following statement that the "Merry-ten social club" would hold a ball at Burnap's Block.

The "Merry-ten social club" give a ball at **Burnap's** hall on Friday evening.
A Mr Cooke has opened a dry goods and grocery store in Percy's Main street block.

Springfield Republican, Oct. 22, 1873

On June 3, 1875, Mr. Thomas Carrol placed an ad for three more first class milliners.

WANTED—Immediately, three first-class Milliners, to whom liberal salary will be given. THOS. F. CARROLL, **Burnap's** Block, **Windsor Locks, Ct.** je26

Springfield Republican, June 3, 1875

On Dec 4, 1876, a single line in the Windsor Locks news section says that Mr. W. A. Dwight is remodeling Dr. Burnap's old office to turn it into a jewelry store.

W. A. Dwight is remodeling Dr **Burnap's** old office on Main street for a jewelry store.
Springfield Republican, Dec 4, 1876

The next mention of the Burnap's Block was on Oct. 24, 1885, where there was a short news article saying a meeting of the Democrats had occurred in Burnap's Hall.

Windsor Locks.

THE DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL CONVENTION.

The 3d senatorial district democrats met in Burnap's hall at Windsor Locks yesterday morning, with C. T. Inslee of East Windsor as chairman and H. C. Douglass of Windsor Locks secretary. H. S. Woodward of Enfield, C. E. Woodward of East Windsor and T. F. McCarthy of Windsor Locks were chosen a committee on credentials and resolutions. The informal ballot gave James T. Coogan of Windsor Locks 9 votes, J. P. Gray of Enfield 3, Judge M. H. Bancroft of East Windsor 3, and Thomas Loomis of Windsor 4. Mr Coogan was elected on the formal ballot. The convention chose T. W.

Springfield Republican, Oct 24, 1885

On May 27, 1887, the women of St. Paul's church will hold a strawberry and ice cream festival and fair in the Burnap Hall.

The women of St Paul's church will hold a strawberry and ice-cream festival and fair June 15 in Burnap's hall. The proceeds will be used for the women's fund of the church.

Springfield Republican May 27, 1887

On Nov. 24, 1888, a high society Ball was held at Burnap's Hall which had the most important people from Windsor Locks including E. R. Bailey, J.R. Montgomery and Alfred Woods Converse. This was "high society" in Windsor Locks.

The ball in Burnap's hall last evening was a society event that drew out the "bon ton" of the Locks. There were many invited guests from Hartford and other towns while Representative McCarthy did the prompting from a full-dress suit. Among those present were E. B. Bailey, J. R. Montgomery, George M. Montgomery, A. W. Converse and ladies. There were 32 couples in all on the floor.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 25, 1888

On January 1, 1898, the New England telephone and telegraph company moved its office from the Pease Block (Allen Pease's store) to the Burnap Block The Pease

block was on the South corner of Oak and Main Streets, while the Burnap Block was on the North corner.

The New England telephone and telegraph company is moving its office from Pease's block to the southeast room in the Burnap block, the increasing business demanding more room than was available in the old quarters.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 1, 1898

On January 14, 1904, an article was published saying the Burnap Opera House is in need of more exits in case of an emergency.

POOR EXITS AT WINDSOR LOCKS.
Need of Improvement in Burnap Opera House.

The Burnap opera house at Windsor Locks, Ct., the principal amusement house in the town, is poorly equipped with exits, and if a fire broke out during a performance or affair where a large audience was present it is almost certain there would be a loss of life. The opera house is on the

third floor in the Burnap block on Main street, and the main entrance is so constructed that a stranger going into the opera house would require a guide to find the way to the second flight of stairs, and would still need assistance to locate the entrance to the main floor of the opera house. The entrance on Main street leading to the first floor is amply large, and meets all requirements for a hasty exit, but at the top of the stairs the passage to the second floor leads through a long corridor, on both sides of which are office rooms. At the extreme end of the corridor a short stairway leads to the south, at the top of which is a small landing, then another short stairway leads to the north, and at the top a narrow hallway leads in a circular fashion to the entrance to the main floor of the opera house. At the end of the corridor, before reaching the second flight of steps to the opera house, there is an exit leading to a side street, which could be used to advantage if a person succeeded in getting as far as the corridor.

There is but one double door leading from the opera house floor, and with no fire escapes on the building what the consequences would be if a fire broke out or a panic ensued can only be conjectured. There are no adjoining buildings at the front or rear where it would be possible to make an escape in case of a fire, and if one broke out in the corridor or stairway the only plan of escape would be to jump to the ground about 25 or 30 feet below. With a little expenditure it seems as though the place could be made safer by the building of at least two fire escapes at the rear of the building. Memorial hall is provided with ample accommodations in case of fire, as it is a modern building and has broad stairs and passageways.

Springfield Republican,
Jan. 14, 1904

On July 10, 1904, James D. Outerson, who was the town clerk, the town treasurer and registrar, as well as a businessman, moved out of the Burnap Block to a store on Main St.

James D. Outerson is taking steps to remove his business from the Burnap block to the large store recently vacated by M. J. King on Main street, where he will have much more room for his largely increasing stock of goods. Mr Outerson, who holds the positions of town clerk, town treasurer and registrar, will transfer the records and other books of the town, together with the safe and vaults, from the present location to his new store, where he will attend to the duties of his several offices in connection with his other business. He expects to make the transfer the latter part of next week, and will have the new store fully equipped for business the 1st of August.

Springfield Republican, July 10, 1904

The previous article did not say what type of business that Mr. Outerson was in, and it did not say where he was moving. However, in the next article, both of those omissions are corrected. He is moving to a store on the corner of Main and Church Streets, and his business is men's furnishings.

The town clerk's office has been removed this week from the store in the Burnap block to the larger quarters in the building at the corner of Main and Church streets. Town Clerk James D. Outerson, who also conducts a men's furnishing goods store in connection with his duties as town clerk and treasurer, has also moved his stock to the new location.

Springfield Republican, July 23, 1904

The Egner Brothers have decided to refurbish the former quarters of Mr. Outerson, and turn them into a lunch room, as can be seen in the 1905 article.

school. Egner Bros have leased the store in the Burnap block formerly occupied by J. D. Outerson and are fitting it up as a lunch-room. The rear will be given up to a number of pool-tables.

Springfield Republican, June 25, 1905

Mr Martin F. Dumschot, a tailor who had opened a shop in the Burnap Block six months earlier, has been missing for six weeks.

There is considerable interest felt in the case of Martin F. Dumschot, who mysteriously disappeared from here about six weeks ago. He came here last fall and opened a tailor-shop in the Burnap block, where he conducted his business until the time of his disappearance. For some time no particular notice was taken of his absence, as it was thought that he had gone to visit relatives in other parts of the state. As the time went by and no news of the man came to his friends here, they became alarmed and started inquiries, which have so far been fruitless. His relatives were communicated with, but none of them knew anything of his whereabouts. He has a sister at South Windsor and brothers at Waterbury and Naugatuck, who fear that he has met with some misfortune.

Springfield Republican, Apr. 8, 1906

The next article is interesting because of how the newspaper wrote about African Americans in the early 1900s. The May 4, 1911 article is about a dance contest.

Windsor Locks, Conn., May 4.—Great rivalry exists in this town among the colored exponents of the terpsichorean art. Last Saturday evening, George Jackson, better known as "Shine," gave an exhibition in Burnap's Opera House. His performance aroused much jealousy among the colored brethren and he is out with a challenge to any colored man of this vicinity for a "wooden shoe" contest. He gives Albert Scott the preference for a contest to take place next Saturday night at Burnap's hall, for a side bet as large as Scott wishes to make it. The only requirements laid down by Jackson are that the money shall be posted before 6 p. m., May 6, and that M. T. Scannell shall referee.

Springfield Daily News
May 4, 1911

The March 12, 1912 article is about a large amount of money being missing from the bank. There were disagreements as to how to solve the problem. While it doesn't say so in the article, Dr. Burnap's brother in law, Mr. Alfred Woods Converse, had stolen \$185,000 from the Windsor Locks savings bank. Many citizens were going to lose their savings. The problem of how to solve the problem was difficult and caused great controversy, as we can see in the March 12, 1912 article below.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Ct., Saturday, Mch. 16.
A sentiment in favor of having the **Windsor Locks** savings bank placed in the hands of a receiver has been growing among many depositors who are clamoring for a speedy settlement of the bank muddle. This sentiment is being largely fostered by members of the committee who were elected at a depositors' meeting many weeks ago to represent the interests of depositors. Posters were put up about the town to-day calling for a meeting of depositors to be held in **Burnap's opera** house Monday evening, the 25th. The plan of
The Springfield Republican, March 12, 1912

The telephone company's business was growing rapidly and they needed more room for more hardware to upgrade the previous telephones which were of older technology. The Oct. 27, 1912 article describes the situation.

The telephone company has had gangs of men at work inside and out preparing for the changes in the system from the bell ringing method to the common battery system. The new quarters in the **Burnap block** are being remodeled to meet the requirements of the company. Partitions have been put in and new floors are being laid and metal ceilings are to be put on some of the new rooms. New switchboards and other appliances of modern character will be installed, but it will be a couple of months more before the changes will be all made and the new system put into use.

Springfield Union, Oct 27, 1912

The following is a long article which gives the details of the expansion of the Telephone Company's business in Windsor Locks. They were expanding to take up almost an entire floor of the Burnap Block on a ten year lease with an option for five more years. For anyone interested in the nature of the Telephone Company's expansion, this is an excellent article. The first two sentences in the article are about the bank problem. Someone must have forgotten to edit the article before it went to press.

**Growth of Telephone Business Has
Made Necessary Larger Quarters
and Improved Service—More Sub-
scribers Than in Thompsonville.**

From Our Special Correspondent.

WINDSOR LOOKS, Ct., Saturday, Aug. 3.

Quiétude, exceptional even for the summer season, reigned over Windsor Locks last week, unbroken except for a manifestation of the bitterness which is still rankling in many hearts over the bank issue. The chief incident in the progress of the town was the transfer of the telephone exchange headquarters to the Burnap block. The change is made necessary on account of the rapid growth of the business of the Windsor Locks branch of the company and is notable as a sign of the development of the town as a whole. Ten years ago the number of telephones installed in the town was very small, but to-day nearly every house has one and the operators are among the busiest people in the place. The transfer was made Wed-

nesday, when representatives of the Southern New England telephone company signed a lease with the owners of the Burnap block taking over the use of all but two rooms on the second floor of the building for 10 years with the privilege of renewing for five years more. It is planned to enlarge the present room for the operators by an extension of the switchboard. Lawyer Johnson's office has been turned over to the company and will be used as the office for Manager G. C. Rising, while the room adjoining that on the Main-street front is to be used as the stock room. Other rooms which have just been acquired are to be utilized as the wire chief's office, for testing apparatus and for the power plant and storage batteries. On the whole, the changes are sweeping ones and point to vastly increased facilities in conducting the company's business. It is proposed by the company to change the system for the exchange from the bell and magneto plan to the common battery, and this change will do away with the antiquated system of calling central in favor of the simpler method in use in all larger places. Previous to this it has been necessary to ring a bell before removing the receiver, but now merely taking down the receiver will call the operator. A special apparatus is to be affixed to the old instruments while the changes are being made, and when they are completed new instruments will be installed where they are required. The company hopes to have all the changes completed and the new system in good running order by the latter part of October, and is also talking of doing a certain amount of underground work, with a cable through Spring street. The Windsor Locks exchange now has a total of 302 subscribers and the Thompsonville exchange has 622, as compared with a total of about 200 in both sections 10 years ago.

Springfield Republican
Aug. 4, 1912

The May 6, 1913 article, which follows, shows that the telephone company's new technology and the expansion worked very well.

New Telephone System Works Well.

The changes in the system in the central telephone office have been made without causing any hindrance in the service and the new method of caring for the calls is done in good manner by the operators. Since the "cut-over" the outside men have been calling at the houses or offices of the many subscribers to remove the handles so that no more ringing will be done and later the present instruments will be replaced by the improved type for the common battery system. The central office in the **Burnap block** is well adapted to care for the company's business now, as much more space on the second floor in the **block** is utilized by having all the rooms on that floor except one connected for the telephone company's affairs and all are equipped with the most modern appliances for the business.

Springfield Republican, May 6, 1913

While the following article has a headline about an assault, the more interesting information in the article of Aug 21, 1913, was that the top floor of the Burnap Building had a Polish boarding house in it.

Sixty Days for Assault.

John Kowolski was arrested by Officer Gogarty this morning in Windsor Locks for assaulting a woman boarder at the Polish boarding house on the top floor of the **Burnap block** in Main street. In the mixup Kowolski was pushed out of a window in the rear of the building, taking the wire screening and casing from the window with him. He turned a somersault in the air, landing on his feet. He was brought before Justice Lashin this noon and fined \$5 and costs of court and given 60 days in jail. He was taken to the Hartford county jail this afternoon.

Springfield Republican, Aug 21, 1913

Sewers are an absolute necessity for a growing town. The June 22, 1913 article tells about a meeting at the Burnap Block to vote on apportionment of the cost.

THE WINDSOR LOCKS SEWER.

Special Meeting Will Determine Apportionment of Cost—Interest in Loan Association—School Graduations.

From Our Special Correspondent.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Ct., Saturday, June 21.

The last act of the sewer and sidewalk charter for the town will be enacted Wednesday evening at the special town-meeting in **Burnap's** opera house, and at which the voters will consider the acceptance of the two charters as passed by the General Assembly, and will vote upon such parts of the charters as require town action. That the charters will pass in the form they now stand seems to be unquestioned. A meeting of all the citizens of the town was held before the matter went to the Legislature, and at that time no objections were raised to either of the proposed charters as a whole. The only dis-

Springfield Republican, June 22, 1913

The Western Union Telegraph company, which was housed at the Train Depot, is being folded into the Telephone company. The details are covered in the July 26, 1913 article below.

TELEGRAPH CHANGES.

Suffield Business to Be Transmitted from Windsor Locks.

SUFFIELD, Conn., July 25—Beginning Aug. 1 the local office of the Western Union Telegraph company at the depot and also that at the Windsor Locks depot will be closed and these offices transferred to the local division of the Southern New England Telephone company in the **Burnap block** in Windsor Locks. The combined business will be conducted by George C. Rising, the present manager of the telephone company. Along with the consolidating of the offices here, the telegraph company will discontinue the office at Thompsonville and persons wishing to send telegrams from Thompsonville, Hazardville and Somersville may call the Windsor Locks office without

any toll line charge.

This service is extended only to telephone subscribers. Agencies will be established at O. C. Bugbee's store in West Suffield, McMullen's store in Somersville and Allen's store in Hazardville for receiving messages, from where they will be telephoned to the operator at the center office in Windsor Locks. The local telephone central office will be equipped with the needed facilities for handling messages. An operator will be on duty from 8 o'clock in the morning to 8 o'clock in the evening and after that hour messages will be telephoned to Hartford and from there transmitted to their destination.

Louis Mollnari, the automobile owner, who came near figuring in an accident at Fuller's corner, wishes to correct a statement published in this morning's paper. Instead of driving the truck he was in a light runabout with his two children and in turning out to the right to avoid an accident at the turn he ran into the drain at William S. Fuller's house and broke a small connection to the steering apparatus of the machine.

*Springfield Union
July 26, 1913*

the Jan 14, 1914 article, we see that there were two movie theaters operating in Windsor Locks. One was the Princess Theater, which was on top of Blanche's Bowling Alley on Grove St. The other was the Burnap Opera House, which also showed movies. In this article, we see that the Burnap Opera House agreed to stop showing movies, and the Princess Theatre will continue to operate as a movie theater.

The two moving picture houses that have been operated in competition for some time have been combined. Hereafter the pictures will be shown only in the **Princess theater** and the show in the Burnap opera house will be closed. George J. Rice of Thompsonville and M. Weiner of Hartford will manage the **theater**.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 14, 1914

In the Nov. 9, 1916 article, an interesting event is described. A number of drum and bugle corps presents a series of dance programs in Burnap's Hall.

The drum and bugle corps will give the first of a series of novelty dances in **Burnap's** hall Saturday night. They will have as guests each night three different corps from other places in the state and previous to the dance they will give a street parade and afterward some of them will give drills in the hall.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 9, 1916

Columbus Day ball at Burnap's Hall, with music provided by an orchestra is described in the Oct. 8, 1916 article.

Plans for the celebration of Columbus day have been perfected by Italian societies of the town. The parade, headed by Colt's band of Hartford, will march through the principal streets Thursday afternoon. It will start at 2.30 o'clock. A dance in **Burnap's** hall has been arranged for the evening, for which Groves's orchestra will furnish the music. It is expected that stores will close at noon.

Springfield Republican
Oct. 8, 1916

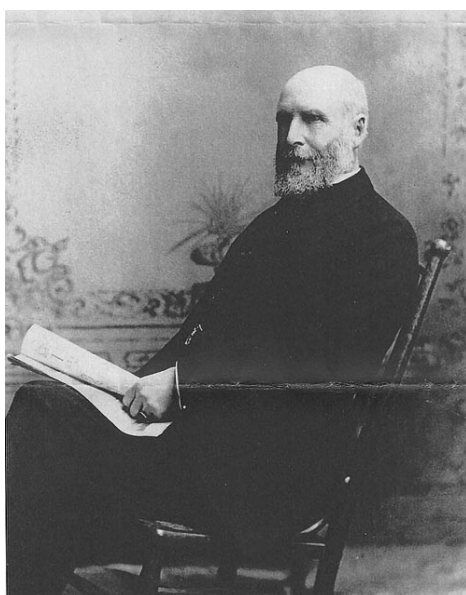
Up until now, the telephone and telegraph companies had been integrating under the Telephone company at the Burnap Block. However, the Feb. 12, 1916 article shows a change. Now the telegraph company is moving out of the Burnap Block to the Carlisle Block, although business between the two companies will remain as it was.

The local office of the Western Union telegraph company will be moved next week from the telephone office in the **Burnap block** to another office by itself in the Bidwell **block**, where the business will be conducted in conjunction with the telephone company, as at present.

Springfield Republican, Feb 12, 1916

Here is some information about Dr. Burnap. Dr. Sidney R. Burnap was born in 1833 and he died in 1901. He was married to Clara A. Converse Burnap (1842 - 1938). They had two daughters, Mary Converse Burnap (1869 - 1947), and Clara Annie Burnap. He was a physician and a financier. That is an interesting combination.

He and his family lived in a very large house on Maple Street. It sat on about 100 acres of land. The house was called "The Castle" by some. The 26 room house was a popular place for town picnics and social gatherings. When the Burnap family sold their estate, the land was subdivided and put up for auction. According to Mickey Danyluk, a fire in a barn at the Burnap estate was the impetus for Windsor Locks to form a Fire Department. One can assume that Dr. Burnap had a good deal of influence in the town government. Dr. Burnap died on Sept. 3, 1901, at the age of 68. He is buried in Grove Cemetery in Windsor Locks. Below is a portrait of Dr. Burnap.



Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap (1833-1901)

Burnap's brother-in-law, Alfred Woods Converse, a highly esteemed man who served as both the town's postmaster and manager of the Windsor Locks Bank, died in the Burnap mansion. He had shot himself in the chest with a pistol while in his own home. He claimed he was cleaning his pistol when it discharged. He called for help and was taken to his sister's house where he died on January 14, 1912. His sister was Dr. Burnap's widow. (information from Mickey Danyluk).

Two weeks after Mr. Converse's death, Windsor Locks Bank officials confirmed that \$185,000 had been stolen from the safe. Alfred Woods Converse was an important man in Windsor Locks. He was the Town Clerk, head of the GAR (Civil War veterans association), head of the Masons, Treasurer of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank, and Postmaster of Windsor Locks.

Below is an 1880 photo of the Burnap estate with his family in front.



Dr. Sidney R. Burnap family and estate 1880

This concludes the history of the Burnap Block while it was under the ownership of Dr. Sidney Burnap, who died in 1901. The building stayed in the estate of Dr. Burnap until it was sold to Charles Colli in 1918.

Section 2 - Central Hall (1918 - 1938)

After 1916, no more newspaper articles could be found which referred to the Burnap Block. From 1922 to 1934, the Springfield newspapers had 122 articles which referred to "Central Hall". Central Hall was the former Burnap Block. Those 122 articles are highly repetitive. This section presents ten of the 122 newspaper articles to give the reader a feel of what was going on at Central Hall. Most of the articles were about basketball scores or the results of boxing matches. This set of ten newspaper articles is representative of the full set of 122.

The floor of the dance hall of the Burnap Building which was built over springs remained in use in Central Hall. That was the big room now used primarily for boxing matches, basketball games, and meetings.

The first newspaper article mentioning Central Hall appeared on Jan. 27, 1921. It announced that the next night there would be a basketball game in Central Hall, followed by a dance.

The Churchills of Windsor Locks will play the Foster Five of Springfield to-night in Central hall. Windsor Locks. Dancing will follow. The Churchills would like to hear from teams 120 to 130. Address John Fitzpatrick, 17 Church street, Windsor Locks, Ct.

Springfield Daily News, Jan. 27, 1921

The next article (Feb,23 1922) says that the Suffield Athletic Club basketball team will play the Windsor Locks "Churchills" in Central Hall.

The Suffield Athletic club basketball team will play with the Churchills in the **Central hall** Thursday evening.

Springfield Republican
Feb.23,1922

The Feb. 1, 1926 article says that the Chicopee Nonotucks will play the Windsor Locks "Advertisers".

The Nonotucks of Chicopee will play the **Windsor Lock Advertisers** tonight at **Central hall, Windsor Locks.** The Skiptown squad will make the trip by automobile and will leave Chicopee at 6.

Springfield Republican, Feb.1, 1926

In the Jan 25, 1927 article, the Windsor Locks "Advertisers" have beaten the Springfield team. Two games were played. The second was between two women's teams. Both the Windsor Locks and Springfield teams each had a mens and a women's team

Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 24—The Springfield A. A. collapsed completely before the powerful offensive of the **Windsor Locks Advertisers** in a five-minute overtime periods at **Central hall** here tonight and were beaten, 36 to 26. The score at the end of the regulation game stood at 23-all. Torrant featured for the Ads while Leyden starred for the Athletics. In a preliminary game the Advertiser Girls defeated the Diamond Match Maidens, 10 to 8. The scores:—

Windsor Locks A.			Springfield A. A.				
B. F. P.			B. F. P.				
Potter, lf	2	2	6	Hayden, rg	0	1	1
Snelgrove, lf	0	0	0	Christ'fori, lg	1	1	3
Tarrant, rf	4	3	11	Smith, c	3	1	7
Midden, c	4	1	9	Leyden, rf	3	2	8
Lord, lg	1	1	3	Fitzgerald, lf	2	3	7
Waterman, rg	2	1	5				
Conroy, rg	1	0	2				
	14	8	36		9	8	26

Referee, Johnson. Time, 20-minute halves and five minutes overtime.

Advertiser Girls			Diamond M. Girls		
B. F. P.			B. F. P.		
Colli, lf	1	0 2	Palazzi, rg	0	0 0
V.Shell'ton, rf	1	0 2	Lieber, lg	1	0 2
Cameron,	0	0 0	Geroux, c	0	0 0
Sweeney, lg	0	0 0	Paglo, rf	1	0 2
D.Shell'ton, rg	3	0 0	Chambers, lf	2	0 4
	5	0 10		4	0 8

Springfield Republican, Jan 25, 1927

The Jan. 21, 1928 article describes a High School basketball game between Windsor Locks High School and Bloomfield High School.

AT WINDSOR LOCKS
Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 20—Windsor **Locks** High defeated the Bloomfield High quintet here tonight in the **Central hall**, 30 to 17. Karges starred for the winners while Lynch scored for the losers. In a preliminary game the **Windsor Locks** Second team beat the Bloomfield seconds 20 to 7. The score:—

Windsor Locks			Bloomfield High		
	B.	F.	P.		B. F. P.
Huntley, lf	4	2	10	Grady, rg	1 2 4
Byrne, rf	0	1	1	Lynch, lg	1 2 4
Karges, rf	8	1	13	Bettors, c	1 1 3
McHugh, c	0	0	0	Douglas, rf	1 1 3
Dowd, lg	0	1	1	Tyrrell, lf	1 1 3
Marion, rg	1	3	5		
	11	8	30		5 7 17

Springfield Republican, Jan. 21, 1928

The Jan. 20, 1929 article is especially interesting for Windsor Locks residents who remember or remember hearing about Marconi's Luncheonette, which was run by three brothers: Louis, John and Angelo. This article mentions Louie Marconi and "Andy" Marconi. The latter must have been an error. Possibly they meant "Angie," which would have referred to Angelo.

WINDSOR LOCKS SCENE **OF AMATEUR FIGHTS**

The New **Central** Boxing club of **Windsor Locks**, Ct., will put on its first amateur show Tuesday night at **Central hall** with an all-star show. The first bout is to get under way at 8 and Matchmaker Fitzpatrick expects to handle a large crowd.

Sailor Al of Thompsonville is scheduled to meet Walter Kress of Hartford in the star bout of the evening. Earnie Vance, **Windsor Locks** boy, meets Frank Pittlak of Chicopee in a grudge fight at 165 pounds. There are also several Springfield boys on the card, among them the O'Brien brothers. Billy meets Andy Marconi of **Windsor Locks** while Wally mixes it up with Jimmy Martin, also of **Windsor Locks**.

Frankie Columbo of **Windsor Locks** who put up such a good showing with Merino Pagnoni is to meet Tommy Flanagan of Springfield at 140 pounds. Other bouts find Jimmy Quagliaroli of **Windsor Locks** meeting Billy Krack of this city, Jimmy DiSanti of Springfield meeting Dominick Lonnotti of **Windsor Locks** and Joe Mandeli of this city against Louie Marconi of **Windsor Locks**.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 20, 1929

The Jan. 23, 1929 article refers to the results of the boxing matches which were announced in the previous article. Louie Marconi beat his opponent, Joe Mandell, of Springfield, but "Andy" Marconi was defeated by Billy O'Brien of Springfield.

Pitlak Wins Main Bout On Windsor Locks Card

Windsor Locks, Ct., Jan. 22—Frank Pitlak of Chicopee won a three-round decision over Ernie Vance of Windsor Locks here tonight in the main bout of the amateur show held at the Central hall under the New Central boxing club. Over 500 fans turned out for this third card. In the semi-final Sailor Al of Thompsonville won on a foul from Walter Kress of Hartford in the third round.

Billy O'Brien of Springfield won the decision over Andy Marconi of Windsor Locks. Frankie Columbo of Windsor Locks knocked out Tommy Flannagan of Springfield in the first round. Louie Marconi of Windsor Locks defeated Joe Mandell of Springfield by a decision, while Jimmy Martin of Windsor Locks won the decision over Al Farricelli of Springfield, the latter subbing for Wally O'Brien of the same town.

Springfield Republican, Jan. 23, 1929

The Garbarino market in Central Hall Block was broken into, as we see in the Dec. 27, 1929 newspaper article. The interesting thing about this writeup is that it makes clear the entire building that used to be the Burnap Block was now known as the "Central Hall Block." The term "Central Hall" didn't just refer to the Hall that was used for boxing, basketball, meetings, etc.

The fruit store conducted by D. Garbarino in the Central hall block was broken into last night and about \$6 and some merchandise stolen. Entrance was gained by breaking the protecting shield on a rear window and lowering the top half. No arrests have been made.

Springfield Union, 12-27-1929

The Nov. 23, 1933 article gave the result of a meeting of the Athletic Association which decided to start a basketball team for the winter at Central Hall.

At the meeting of the Athletic Association Monday night it was decided to foster a basketball team for the winter to play weekly or oftener at home and to engage the Central hall for that purpose. Joseph Conroy will be manager.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 23, 1933

The newspaper article (March 15, 1934) says that the Windsor Locks Promoting quintet at Central Hall. 1934 was the last year in which newspaper articles mentioned Central Hall.

Chicopee Pros Play Windsor Locks Tonight
 The Chicopee Promoting quintet travels to Windsor Locks, Ct., tonight where they are scheduled to meet the Windsor Locks Advertisers at Central Hall. Last week the Nutmeggers, with several local hoopsters in their lineup took the measure of the Pros at Chicopee. The following players will make the trip to Windsor Locks: Coach Bennie Banas, Manager Cyran, "Ski" Linehan, Pasterczyk, Stanek, Moynihan, Les Maynard, Frank Adamski and "Flee" Niemiec. The start will be made from the Chicopee Polish National home at 6.15.
Springfield Republican

Charles Colli, who owned Central Hall, was born in 1882 and died in 1938. He is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. He was married to Lena A. Massino, who was born in 1876 and died in 1930. They had one son, Charles, who was born in 1905 and died in 1930. Here is a photo of Charles Colli with his first business in Windsor Locks, a grocery and meat cart, followed by a photo of him when he was the town's Fire Chief. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks lists a business owned by Charles Colli as: "Colli, Charles. Flour, Grain and Feed. Center St."



Charles Colli, Meat and Groceries Cart Store



*Charles Colli
Windsor Locks Fire Chief
1916 - 1922*

Section 3 - The A&P Building

In 1938, Charles Colli sold the Central Hall Block to Graziano Graziani, who razed the building and replaced it with a single story building which extended from Coly's Hotel to Oak Street. It had two storefronts. The largest store was the A&P. The smaller store, on the corner of Oak and Main Streets, had been a Western Auto store which was owned by Don LaRussa, who later turned it into "D.F.LaRussa's" appliance store. That pair of storefronts didn't change much until 1979 when all the stores along Main St were razed for the process called redevelopment. Below is a photo of The A&P and the corner store before re-development.



Corner of Oak and Main. Don La,Russa's Appliance store,
and the A&P. LaRussa originally had his Western Auto Store here.
Previously the Central Hall Building occupied both spaces

The following article from the Springfield Republican of Nov. 5, 1938, is an excellent brief summary of the entire history of the building, from when it was the Burnap Block to when it became Central Hall, to when Mr. Graziani bought the building.

GRAZIANI GRAZIANO BUYS BURNAP BLOCK

Windsor Locks, Nov. 4—Transfer papers have been recorded in the town clerk's office for the sale of the Burnap block one of the oldest business blocks in this town. The property has been purchased by Graziani Graziano of Chestnut street, local contractor and builder, from the City bank of Norwalk.

The property is located on the corner of Main and Oak streets and is a three story brick structure, with four stores on the ground floor. The block was erected in 1863 by the late Fred Abbe and a few years later was purchased by Dr Sidney R. Burnap. In 1918 the late Charles Colli of this town bought this property and in 1929 the City bank of Norwalk obtained possession and Charles D. Colton of this town has acted as their agent here.

For many years part of the second floor was used by the Southern New England Telephone company for the local telephone exchange and business office, and that section of the building has been vacant practically all the time since the telephone company moved to their new building on Spring street, several years ago.

When the building was erected, the third floor of the building was built with heavy arch springs under the floor, which adapted the hall especially for dancing and for many years this dance hall was known for miles around as having one of the best floor surfaces in this section for dancing. The hall was used for many years as a moving picture theater, and later became the home of the Central theater when owned by Mr Colli. For several years the hall has not been used, having been condemned by state inspectors on account of inadequate exits.

The new owner, Mr Graziano, expects to repair and remodel the block.

Springfield Republican, Nov. 5, 1938

Section 4 - Conclusions

This article has traced the history of the building on the corner of Main and Oak Streets in 1863. No information was available about the building between the time it was built and the time when it was bought by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap in about 1865. It became known as "Burnap's Block," and it soon became a social and business center of Windsor Locks. It contained a number of stores, some major businesses such as the Windsor Locks Journal and the telephone and telegraph companies. It also housed a large hall known as Burnap's Opera House which held operas and shows as well as movies, dances and meetings. We reviewed newspaper articles from 1870 to 1916.

Dr. Burnap died in 1901 and his estate sold the Burnap Block to Charles Colli in 1918. It became known as the Central Hall Block. Research turned up 122 newspaper articles about the Central Hall block from 1918 to 1934. We reviewed some of them. While Central Hall continued to house businesses and stores, as did the Burnap Block, most of the news stories were about sporting events. The building became more focussed on sports, especially basketball and boxing. It was also used for meetings and for dances.

The building was razed after it was bought in 1935 by Graziano Graziani, and replaced with a one story building housing the A&P and a smaller store on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Not much changed with the building until the redevelopment of Main St in 1979, when the building was torn down.

Chapter 17

History of the Ashmere Estate

The history of the Ashmere estate in Windsor Locks and the history of the Dexter/Coffin/Haskell family are tightly intertwined. This article presents a brief history of the Ashmere mansion, along with some happenings in the Dexter/Coffin/Haskell family, which provide a context for the history of the most elegant house ever built in Windsor Locks.



Ashmere

Seth Dexter and Jabez Haskell were early settlers in Pine Meadow, which later became Windsor Locks. Seth Dexter's daughter, Harriet Clark Dexter, married Edwin Douglas in 1834. Edwin Douglas was the "onsite engineer" during the construction of the Windsor Locks canal. Seth gave his daughter, Harriet, a five-acre tract of land on Main Street. Because of the beautiful Ash trees on the property, it was called "Ash Meadow". Edwin and Harriet had a magnificent mansion built on that property in about 1848. The mansion came to be known as "Ashmere". They lived in it until the canal was completed. Then they moved to Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania where Edwin worked on another canal.

In 1861, Julia Sergeant Dexter, a granddaughter of Seth Dexter, married Thomas R. Haskell, a grandson of Jabez Haskell. Thomas R. Haskell died shortly after fathering a daughter, who was named Thomasine. We shall re-visit her shortly. In 1866, Julia, who was then a widow, married Herbert Raymond Coffin, and they moved into Ashmere. Herbert and Julia Coffin had two sons, Arthur D. Coffin and Herbert Raymond Coffin, Jr.

In 1901, Herbert Raymond Coffin died at his Ashmere estate. He had started work at the Dexter paper mill as a clerk, and rose up to become a partner. He was also President of the Connecticut River Co, a Director of the Connecticut Banking Co, the Medlicott Co, and the Windsor Locks Bridge Co. Both of their sons followed their father into leadership roles in the

paper company. Arthur Dexter Coffin continued to live at Ashmere. Arthur Dexter Coffin later had a son, Dexter Drake Coffin, to whom we shall return shortly.

We now return to Thomasine. She was the reason for one of the most important social events ever held in Windsor Locks. In 1906, Thomasine Dexter Haskell was engaged to marry George Albert Conant. Thomasine's mother, Julia Dexter Haskell, lived in the Ashmere mansion. Julia offered to have her daughter's wedding at the Ashmere. Thomasine accepted. On December 11, 1906, three hundred people came from New Hampshire, New York and Connecticut to Windsor Locks by train and trolley. When they arrived at the Railroad Station, they were taken by carriage to the Ashmere estate. A great deal of work had been done on the estate to prepare for the wedding. A large porch had been enclosed and steam heat was added, along with additional electric lights. The ceremony took place in the Music Room. The mansion was decorated in a scheme of white and green for winter. The dinner was sumptuous. The orchestra was magnificent. The decorations were extravagant. The December 1906 event was truly extraordinary.



Music Room at Ashmere

1914 Mrs. Julia Dexter Haskell Coffin died in her Ashmere home. She was well known for her charity work among the immigrant community, and viewed her wealth as a trust for the less fortunate.

At the time of his death in 1940, Arthur Dexter Coffin was living in Ashmere. and his son Dexter Drake Coffin was living in the white brick colonial next door which later became the Bickford Convalescent Home. After Arthur Dexter Coffin's death, his son, Dexter Drake Coffin, and his family moved into Ashmere. His wife, Betty, never liked Ashmere. She felt it was too big and that it felt coldly institutional.

In 1949, Thomasine Haskell Conant died at her home in Hartford, Conn. Prior to her marriage to George Conant, she was active in church and civic affairs in Windsor Locks. She took great pride in her work with the public library. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Public Park, which later named Pesci Park. In 1940, she donated the Main Street property on which her parents' house had been located, to the Windsor Locks Public Library for its exclusive use as a library site.



Grounds of the Ashmere

In 1952, Dexter Drake Coffin and his wife, Betty were still living in Ashmere. Mr. Coffin, who sat on the Library Board, was ready to retire, and to move elsewhere. He offered the Ashmere and its five acres to the Library Board to serve as the Windsor Locks Public Library. The Library Board declined his offer. Interestingly enough, Ella Grasso was on the Library Board at that time. After his offer to the Library Board was refused, Mr. Coffin sold the Ashmere to local businessmen who turned it into an Inn. That business lasted for seven years. The Ashmere was then purchased by a New York company as the site for Dexter Plaza, and the building was demolished in 1960. It is said that Dexter Coffin wept as sat in the Board Room of C.H. Dexter mill, and watched the mansion being torn down.

When Dexter Drake Coffin left Windsor Locks in 1952, he also sold the Dexter house on Main Street to Rose and Ken Bickford, and donated land behind Ashmere to Center Street for a new high school. Later, that building, which was built in 1955, became the Middle School. The bridge portion of Interstate I-91 was named for Dexter Drake Coffin, who gave his time, talent and money to the local community, and was largely responsible for steering the decision to place an airport at the western end of Windsor Locks instead of in Hartford. That airport became Bradley Field. Dexter Drake Coffin died in 1966.

The final chapter of the Dexter family in Windsor Locks was written in the year 2000. The C.H. Dexter Corporation was the oldest corporation on the NY Stock Exchange. It was established by Seth Dexter in 1769, and it grew into a worldwide manufacturing conglomerate. In 2000, the final stockholder meeting was held on the floor of the mill. Dexter D. Coffin Jr, and his brother, David L. Coffin, sons of Dexter D. Coffin, were present.

To avoid a hostile takeover in 2000, the company sold all of its holdings. The Windsor Locks portion of C.H.Dexter Corp., known as the Dexter Non-Woven Materials Division, was sold to the Ahlstrom Paper Group of Finland. That was the end of the C.H.Dexter Corporation.

Below is a photo of the Ashmere estate being torn down.



The Ashmere being torn down

Chapter 18

Blanche's Bowling Alley and the Princess/Palace Theater

Everybody who remembers the old Main Street “downtown” area, remembers Blanche's Bowling Alley. It was on the North Side of Grove Street, just up from Main Street. Not everyone knows that Blanche was Blanche (Bianchi) Lavigne, whose relatives owned Bianchi's Restaurant, Sy Bianchi's Newsstand, and Mondo Bianchi's Shoe Store. Far fewer knew what had been on the top floor of the bowling alley. The goal of this chapter is to tell the story.

Blanche's Bowling Alley was a small affair. It only had four lanes, and it used pin boys because the technology of the bowling alley predated the development of automated pin setters. It was a fun place to spend some time and some energy. Blanche's Bowling Alley was antique, even by the standards of the 1950s and 1960s. Windsor Locks had the “Bradley Bowl” near Bradley Field, which brought the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) Tour to our town. However, one didn't go to Blanche's for the same experience that one would go to the Bradley Bowl. One could walk to Blanche's, and one didn't need much money.

The only available photos of the bowling alley were ones taken of a person or a family, with the bowling alley in the background. See the photograph of Angie (Ferrari) Baron in front of the bowling alley. You can make out the word “BOWLING” on the sign.



**Angie (Ferrari) Baron in front of
Blanche's Bowling Alley**

Unfortunately, the bowling alley burned on February 6, 1972. The building had been owned by Blanche Lavigne, but the bowling alley had been shut down since 1960. See the photo of the fire. After the fire, the building remained closed.



*Blanche's Bowling Alley Burns. Grove St.
Princess Theater was on top floor.*

The top floor of the building used to be a theater which was originally called the Princess Theater, but was later known as the Palace Theater. Leo Montemerlo said that he could see two movies there and get a lollipop for seven cents.

The January 5, 1914 issue of the Springfield Republican had an article which read: "The two moving picture houses that have been operated in competition for some time, have been combined. Hereafter the pictures will be shown only in the Princes theater, and the show in the Burnap Opera House will be closed."

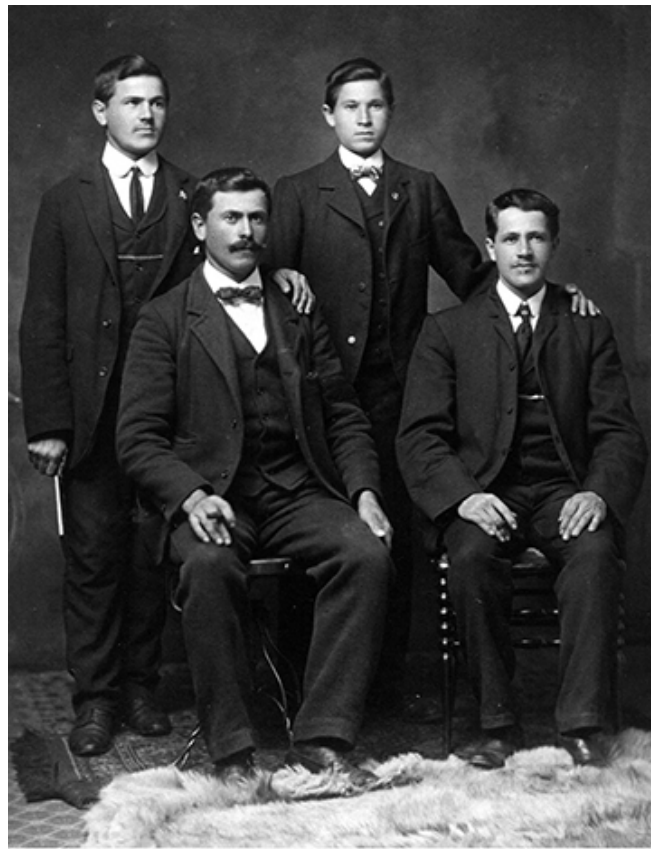
The October 20, 1929 issue of the Springfield Republican shed further light on the subject, saying: "The Palace Theater on Grove Street, closed for a few years, has been sold by the owners, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, to Harold Lavigne of Thompsonville, who will open a bowling alley when alterations are made. This building was built about ten years ago by a company of local Italian men who conducted it as a movie house for a few years, but did not make any money on it. Later it was tried a short time by people from out of town, without success. A few years ago, the owners of the Rialto Theater, Viola and Alfano, bought the Palace and closed it, ending competition that was making business unprofitable for both places for a while."

Now you know the history of the building that was an early movie theater and bowling alley in Windsor Locks.

Chapter 19

The Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company

Leonardo Colapietro was one of four Colapietro brothers: Pasquale, Leonardo, Vito and, Giovanni. They came to Windsor Locks from Turi, a very small town southeastern Italy. Turi is just south of Bari, and is much smaller than Windsor Locks. Pasquale was the first to arrive in the US. He came to Windsor Locks and set up a confectionary store by 1906. His three brothers followed within a few years. Leonardo and Vito stayed in the US. After a while, Giovanni returned to his hometown in Italy. Here is a portrait of the four brothers, which was taken before 1910.



*The Colapietro Brothers
Vito, Giovanni, Leonardo and Pasquale*

After they were here for a few years, Vito and Leonardo went back to Italy briefly, to find wives. Both were successful. Below is a photo of the families of Vito, Leonardo and Pasquale taken in 1914, followed by a photo of Leonardo and Stella's growing family in about 1921. The brothers wasted no time in starting businesses and families.



Three Colapietro Families - about 1914

*Vito and Anna
Tony Angelo*

*Pasquale and Grazia
Tony Anna Esther*

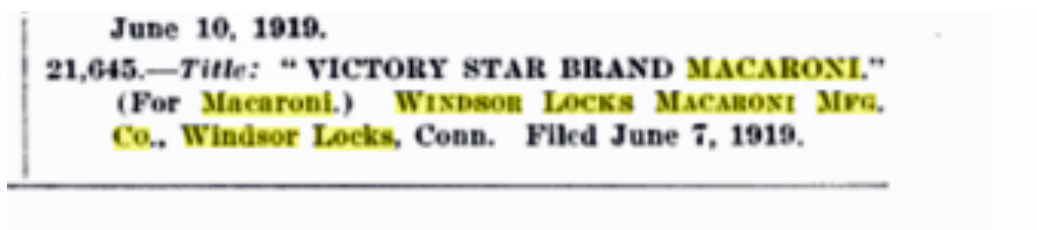
*Leonardo and Stella
Tony*



*Stella (Romito) and Leonardo Colapietro
with their children Esther, Armand and Tony, about 1921*

Pasquale's confectionary shop was in the Mather block. Vito bought the hotel across from the railroad station by 1917, and he had a confectionary store on the ground floor. Leonardo set up his own shop in the Mather block. He started a factory for manufacturing macaroni. It was called the **Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company**. His factory also had a store, which sold not only macaroni, but also various other sundries. A recent telephone conversation with John Zaccheo, the oldest son of Tommasso Zaccheo, who had the Pontiac dealership across from the bridge, turned up the fact that Leonardo's macaroni business was not a small-time operation. He used to have large amounts of high-gluten flour shipped in from Nebraska, Wisconsin and New York.

In 1919, Leonardo Colapietro filed for brand name for his macaroni. The application was filed with the Patent Department.



In 1993, Howard J. White, who at the time was the Municipal Historian of Windsor Locks, wrote an article entitled "Interesting Facts about Windsor Locks". Unfortunately that article did not say who published it or where more copies could be gotten. Since it contains an informative section on the Windsor Locks Macaroni Factory, that section is included here in its entirety.

"Macaroni Factory in Windsor Locks

It is the absolute truth. There was a Macaroni Factory in Windsor Locks. It was owned and operated by Leon Colapietro and located in the First National Bank building on the Southwest corner of Spring and Main Streets. If one were walking along Main Street and the hatchway of the building was open, you could see the young boys making the boxes in which to ship the product. In later years Leon Colapietro and his family moved to Springfield. Another interesting note concerning the Colapietro family was that Leon had two brothers in town, who operated the same type stores, fresh fruit, candy, ice cream, tobacco, cigars, and they had a very good selection of fireworks for the Fourth of July celebrations. As I recall, along with the soda fountain, there was a little ice cream parlor in the rear of each of the stores. Here is an interesting little story about the Colapietro brothers. If you went into Patsy's store to purchase something and he did not have it, he would send you to Leon's store that was up Main St just a short distance, if Leon could not supply with what you were looking for, he would send you to Vito's store that was in the hotel building, across from the old railroad station. If

you will excuse the phrase, the Colapietro brothers "had you either coming or going."

In 1924, there was a fire in the Mather building that started in Leonardo Colapietro's macaroni factory. The January 2, 1924 issue of the Springfield Republican had a long story on the fire. It said that a \$40,000 fire ran through the three story brick building belonging to the heirs of the late William Mather at the corner of Main and Spring Streets early in the morning. The rooms of the Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit company were not damaged. The fire broke out either in the basement where the heaters and electrical motors were for the macaroni factory, or in Leonardo's store on the street level. The fire worked its way up through the walls and damaged the millinery shop and apartment of Mrs Bearmont, and the music studio of Fred C. Abbe. The damage to some of the building was covered by insurance, but the massive damage to Leonardo's factory and store was only partially covered by insurance.

Soon after the fire, Leonardo Colapietro took what was left of his factory and store, and moved them to 878 Main St. in the Italian district of Springfield, Mass. He opened up the **Windsor Locks Supermarket**, and the **Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co.** in that location. Why did he name both of his businesses after the town he just left? Because he loved Windsor Locks. I knew Leonardo Colapietro very well. He was my grandfather's brother. Our family went up to Springfield very often to visit his family. All of the children in our family called him "Zizi Leone," which is Italian for "Uncle Leo". He wasn't our uncle. We called his wife "Zia Stella" (Aunt Stella). These were terms of endearment.

"Zizi Leone" was always at his store, and always wore a big smile. He was a jovial man. Whenever I walked into his store, he would always say something like "Mel, Have a nice apple." or "Hey Mel, come and get some of these good plums." His store thrived in the Italian section of Springfield. The January 30, 1927 issue of the Springfield Republican says: "The Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company plans to enlarge its quarters by occupying the vacant store immediately alongside its present store, and will install a glass partition so that the operation of the machinery can be observed from the front of the establishment. A new preliminary drying process was recently introduced, embodying an improved method of treating the product by the warm air circulating system, reducing the duration of the drying process b about 48 hours." The business reported a 33 percent increase in business over the previous year.

While Leonardo was living and running two businesses in Springfield, and his brother, Vito was doing the same thing in Windsor Locks, the two families and their friends often got together in both towns. Below is a photo of the families and friends of the family in the driveway of Leonardo and Stella's house on Wendell Place, Springfield, which was only short distance from his business. After that photo, there is a photo the Springfield Colapietros and the Windsor Locks Colapietros at the Beach. You can see Leonardo in the upper left.



*L to R: Mrs. Romito; Frank, Julia & Leo Lefemine; Anna & Angelo Colapietro, Maria Lefemine, Mrs. Ziti, Stella Colapietro, Vito Colapietro on tricycle, Domenichella Lefemine in front.
Wendell Place, Springfield, Mass., 1942*



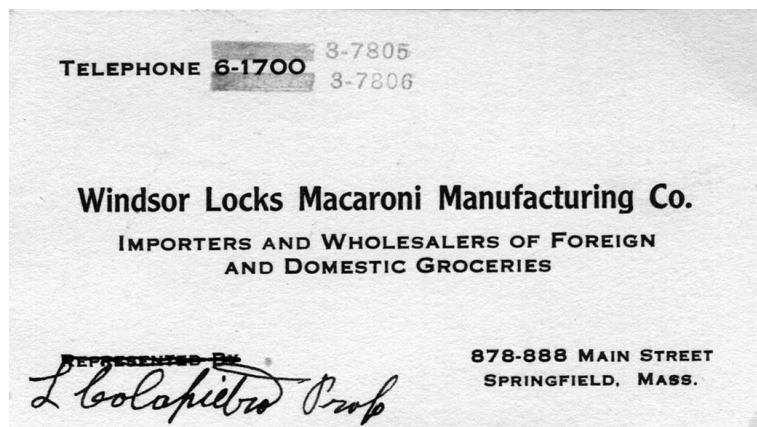
*At the beach at Misquamicut, Rhode Island, 1935
Leo Colapietro left back, John Colapietro, right back
Lena and Esther center, Lil Spinelli right front*

Vito Colapietro's wife, Anna, and Leonardo's wife, Stella, were best friends. When I think back to "Nonny" and "Zia Stella," the following photo illustrates the way I remember them. They were classy ladies.



*"Zia Stella and Nonny"
Stella and Anna Colapietro*

In 1958, Leonardo's Windsor Locks Super Market applied for and got a liquor license. His business continued to do well. Below is his business card.

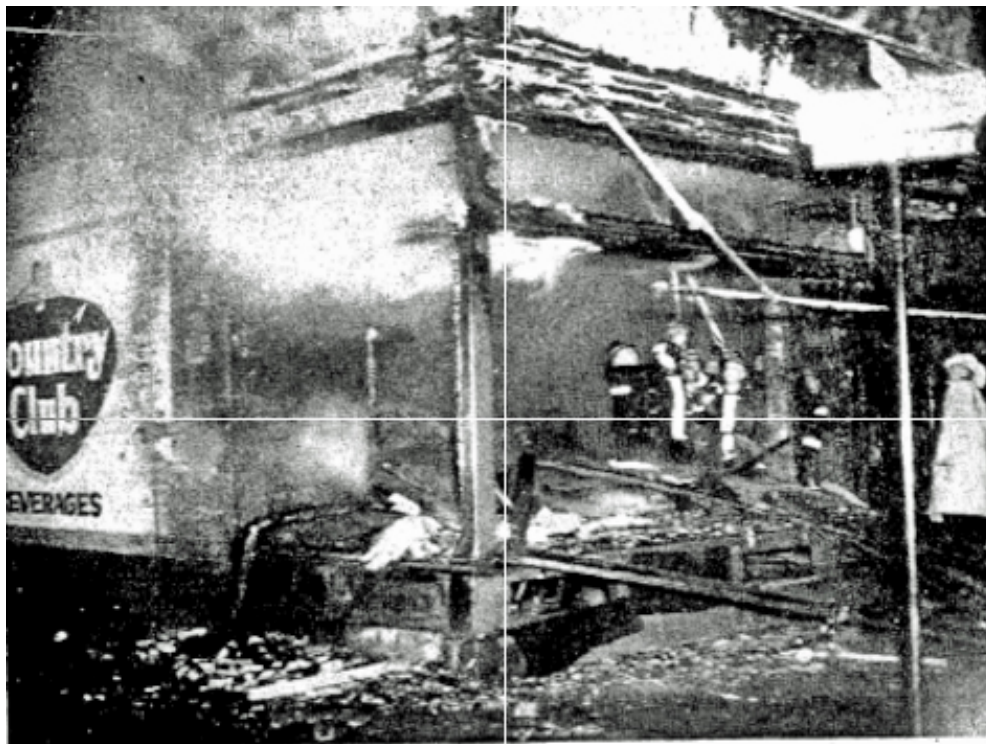


Leonardo Colapietro lived a full and happy life. He died in January of 1961. The Springfield Union issue of Jan. 22, 1961 has his obituary. Remember that there were four Colapietro brothers. All four came to the US, but one of them, Giovanni, returned to his home city of Turi, Italy. Giovanni had two sons who became Catholic priests. One of them, Rev. Antonio Colapietro did move to the US. He presided over the funeral mass for his Uncle Leonardo. The Springfield Union said: "Mr. Colapietro was born Sept 29, 1896, in Turi, Province of Bari, Italy, son of the late Antonio and Pasqua (Lerede) Colapietro. He came to this country 55 years ago and settled in Windsor Locks, CT, where he started his macaroni firm. This was the first business of its kind in the Connecticut Valley. Mr. Colapietro moved the plant to this city in 1924. He stopped the manufacture of macaroni at the outbreak of World War II. His company is still located at 878 Main St., and is operated by his two sons, Anthony and Armand, as the **Windsor Locks Super Market.**"

According to the Springfield Union of June 22, 1966, Anthony and Armand Colapietro transferred the license for the business to Mr Joseph Beaulieu.

The Springfield Union of April 25, 1969 had the following photo of a fire which destroyed the Windsor Locks Super Market.

At the time of the fire, Anthony Colapietro, Leonardo's son, was renting the store to Anthony D'Augustino. The fire was the second in the store within a week. The store had been condemned by the food inspector, and was closed at the time of the fire. That was the end of the Windsor Locks Super Market.



Supermarket Fire of Suspicious Origin

Fire fighters early Thursday morning battle a two-alarm blaze which destroyed the **Windsor Locks Supermarket** at 878 Main St. Owner Anthony D'Agostino of 5 Irene St., estimated loss at \$17,000. Fire officials said the blaze was of suspicious origin and is under investigation.

Springfield Union, April 25, 1969

Here is an early photo of Leonardo and his wife Stella, as they were starting off in Windsor Locks. They were a handsome couple. They were filled with hope and with a belief that they could forge a good life for themselves and their future family. They accomplished what they set out to do.



Stella (Romito) and Leonardo Colapietro

Their heritage lives on. Stella's maiden name was Romito. Her relatives have run an Italian Market since 1921, which was three years before Leonardo and Stella opened up the Windsor Locks Super Market in Springfield. Romito's market is still in business as of this writing in 2017). It used to be on Main Street in Springfield, not far from Leonardo Colapietro's store. The Romito family moved their store to 21 North Main St., East Longmeadow, MA. It is still a genuine Italian Market with the look and feel and smells that it is supposed to have.



Conclusion

Leonardo Colapietro came from a town in Italy that was smaller than Windsor Locks. He had no money and spoke no English. He had just finished being a teenager. The same was true of his three brothers. Three of them stayed in Windsor Locks and founded businesses. Leonardo also founded the first macaroni manufacturing company in Connecticut. He faced adversity when both of his businesses burned in 1924. He saw a chance to grow his businesses in Springfield and he moved them to that city. His businesses and his family flourished. All of his children were successful. This is the kind of businessman and family man that you would want to have in your town.

Chapter 20

St Oronzo of Turi, Italy and Windsor Locks

The feast of St. Oronzo has been celebrated in Windsor Locks since the early 1900s, when a number of people from Turi, Italy emigrated to Windsor Locks. These people included the four Colapietro brothers (Pasquale, Vito, Leonardo and Giovanni), Tommaso Zaccheo, Vito Lefemine, and their wives. Giovanni returned to Italy, but all of the other men became businessmen in Windsor Locks. Pasquale Colapietro had a confectionary store. Vito Colapietro had the hotel. Leonardo Colapietro had the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company. Vito Lefemine had a barber shop. All of these businesses were on Main Street.

These emigrants from Turi were devout members of St. Mary's Parish, and they quickly instituted the annual celebration of St. Oronzo Day. He was the patron saint of Turi. Turi is a town near Bari, Italy, which is in the Southeastern part of the Italian peninsula. They bought a large statue of St. Oronzo, which was carried in the annual parade for the festival of St. Oronzo. They formed the St. Oronzo Society, of which Vito Colapietro was a president for a while.

For a number of years, the festival of St. Oronzo also included a day of celebration in a park in Windsor Locks, at which there was Italian food, music, dancing and fireworks. That park is now the Bellarmine Center.

Below are two photos of the St. Oronzo celebration in Windsor Locks.



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*



**St. Oronzo parade at corner
of Main St. and Spring St.**

The following are photos of the St. Oronzo day celebration in Turi and in Lecce, Italy.



Festival of St. Oronzo in Turi, Italy

The legend of St. Oronzo is as follows. According to a twelfth-century



St. Oronzo celebration in Lecce, Italy

manuscript, a man named Justus, who was a disciple of Saint Paul, was on his way to Rome when he was shipwrecked near the town of Salento. After the shipwreck, Justus converted a citizen named Oronzo, and his nephew, Fortunatus, in the nearby town of Lecce. Oronzo's father, Publius, had been treasurer to the emperor, and Oronzo had succeeded him to this office.

Oronzo and Fortunatus were denounced as Christians, and they refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. They were whipped and kept in jail, but later went to Corinth, where Oronzo met Saint Paul, and was confirmed as the first bishop of Lecce. When they returned to Lecce, the authorities once again persecuted them. Antonius, a representative of Nero, imprisoned Oronzo and Fortunatus, and threatened to kill them if they did not reject their new religion. The two refused, but they managed to be released. They continued to preach in Salento and in Bari. They were finally arrested again by Antoninus and executed about two miles from Lecce.

Oronzo is venerated as the patron saint of Turi. Legend has it that he hid in a cave near there. The ending of a cholera outbreak in 1851 was attributed to him.

The citizens of Windsor Locks are fortunate to have had the festival of St. Oronzo emigrate here from the town of Turi. It adds flavor and a bit of Italian culture to our town. While almost everyone in Windsor Locks has heard of St. Oronzo, not many

knew where the festival came from, who brought it to our town, or what the story of St. Oronzo was. Hopefully, this chapter has shed some light on this.

Chapter 21

One Ferry and Three Bridges

The current (2016) Windsor Locks bridge, known as "The Bridge Street Bridge," connects Windsor Locks with East Windsor. Most people would say that it connects Windsor Locks with Warehouse Point. The explanation is that East Windsor has five sections: Warehouse Point, Broad Brook, Scantic, Melrose, and Windsorville. The section of East Windsor that the bridge connects with is Warehouse Point. Warehouse Point has long been an important place to be connected with. It was first used by William Pynchon, the founder of Springfield, in the 1630s. ("East Windsor, Connecticut", Wikipedia)

Mr. William Pynchon was one of New England's first settlers. He was an aggressive, forward-looking businessmen. He needed to ship goods and supplies to Springfield via the Connecticut River. Unfortunately river boats could not go any farther than the falls located in Enfield, so he needed a place to store goods until they could be transported by land or by special boats as far as Springfield. He built a warehouse at an appropriate spot, and called the place "Warehouse Point". (William Pynchon, Wikipedia) He began sending supplies from Boston, up the Connecticut River, and storing them in Warehouse Point, to await the 14 mile trip to Springfield. (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

To enhance the prospects of commerce in Windsor Locks, it was necessary to connect travel between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point. The first method of crossing the river was by ferry.



**The old ferry between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point
1783 - 1886**

The ferry was tied to a pier in the river to prevent it from being washed downstream. The photograph of the ferry is from about 1885. In it, the ferry is moored on the Warehouse Point side of the river. The buildings on the other side of the river are the mills in Windsor Locks. The ferry operated from 1783 until the suspension bridge was built in 1886. (Giannuzzi)

In October 1886, the ferry was replaced by an impressive suspension bridge, built by the Warehouse Point Bridge and Ferry Company. The bridge was made up of a 550-foot main span and two 300-foot side spans. The concept was to minimize the number of piers in the river and their effects on power wheels immediately upstream. That bridge charged a toll for all traffic until the state purchased it and made it free in July 1908. It was the first free bridge across the Connecticut River in the state. This was the first step in the state's plan to own and control all bridges over the river. (Connecticut Roads)

The suspension bridge was a one-lane toll bridge. The road was then called "State Aid Road No. 20". Later the name was changed to Route 140. The photograph of the bridge (see below) was taken in 1900 from the East bank of the river, looking toward Windsor Locks.



**Suspension bridge: Windsor Locks - Warehouse Point
1886 - 1921**

The main suspension cables were anchored below ground at each end. Each suspension cable was made up of bundles of twisted wire rope. That process was developed by John Roebling in the 1840s and was used on the Brooklyn Bridge. (Giannuzzi)

See the toll ticket (below) for one person to walk across the bridge. In 1907, it cost an individual driving a touring car 25 cents, and it cost twelve and a half cents for a horse, wagon and driver. For a person on foot, the cost was three cents.



Below is a dramatic photo of the suspension bridge in the winter of 1907, when the river was frozen.



Suspension bridge over frozen Connecticut River, 1907

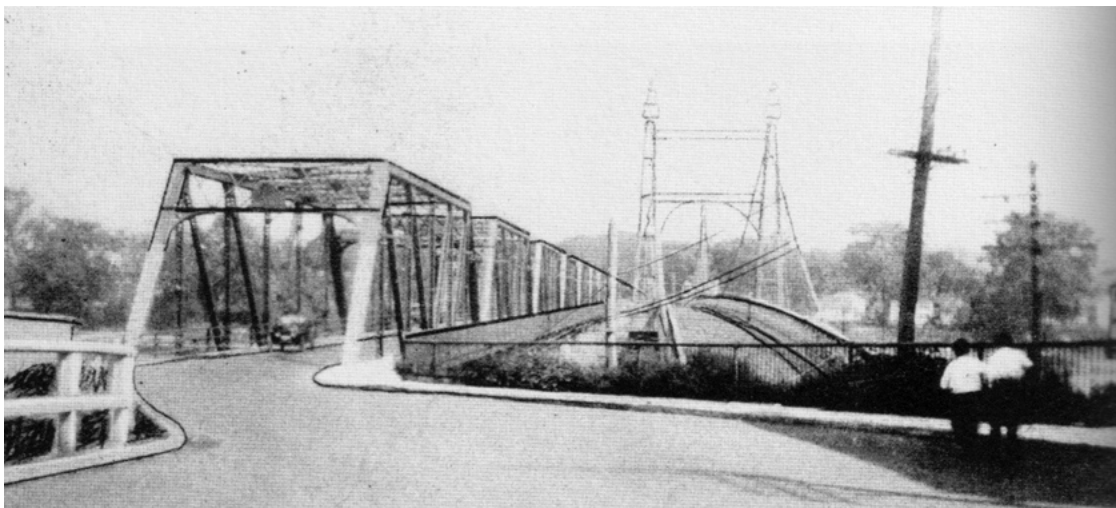
As motor traffic increased, especially truck traffic from the tobacco fields, the old bridge became unsafe and obsolete. Keeping it in good repair was increasingly expensive. In 1919, Hartford County received approval to build a \$350,000 iron truss bridge to replace it. This second bridge opened, at a final cost of about \$500,000, on Dec. 2, 1921. See photo below. The county hoped to sell the old bridge for scrap, but could not find a way to cover expenses of demolition. The state began tearing down the old bridge in 1924. (Connecticut Roads)



**Truss Bridge: Windsor Locks to Warehouse Point
1921 - 1992**

This second bridge was a 7-span truss structure, which was completed in 1921. Each span was approximately 152 feet long, consisting of six 25-foot panels for a total of approximately 1,064 feet between abutments, and a 23-foot curb-to-curb width. The total length of the truss bridge was 1,604 feet. The truss structure was built by the Berlin Construction Company, directly north of the previous bridge. (Bridge Street Bridge)

In the following photo, the Truss Bridge and the Suspension Bridge can be seen standing side by side. Shortly after this photo, the Suspension Bridge was demolished.



Truss and Suspension bridges standing side by side -- 1922

The next photo is of the Truss Bridge after the flood of 1936, when the flood waters went above the road level of the bridge. Try to imagine a flood so big that the level of the river rose above the road level on the road on the bridge. It happened.



Truss Bridge after 1936 flood water topped road level.

The original two-inch wooden planking of the bridge's sidewalk was cantilevered off of the South truss. The original two-inch wooden planks of the sidewalk were replaced by a concrete filled steel grid in 1938. In 1984, serious buckling of the sidewalk slabs required the construction of a temporary sidewalk across the full length of the bridge. The sidewalk was used by many fishermen during the spring shad fishing season. (Giannuzzi)

By the 1960s, the 1921 bridge was growing obsolete. In 1967, the state posted a maximum load of 15 tons, requiring heavier trucks to use the Dexter Coffin Bridge on I-91. In 1983, after the collapse of the Mianus River Bridge on I-95, the DOT initiated a statewide emergency bridge repair program. The decision for the Route 140 bridge was to replace it instead of repairing it. The new bridge opened in 1992. It is referred to as The Bridge Street Bridge. (Connecticut Roads)



**"Bridge St. Bridge" - Windsor Locks to Warehouse Point
Built in 1992**

CONCLUSION -

We have seen that commerce was the reason that people needed to travel between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point. The first method used was a ferry which lasted from 1783 to 1886. A suspension bridge, lasting from 1886 to 1921 was a major improvement over the ferry. It was replaced by a truss bridge which lasted from 1921 to 1992, at which the current modern bridge was built. Of course, each of the three bridges was “modern” when it was built.

A search of Connecticut and Massachusetts newspapers for articles about the bridge in Windsor Locks shows that the Windsor Locks bridge has been a popular topic for a long time. From 1800 to 2016, the search found 18,881 articles on that topic. There were 2600 articles about the ferry in Windsor Locks, Most were from before 1900.

Sources:

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"Windsor Locks Canal (Images of America)" - by Maria Giannuzzi (Arcadia) 2007.

Chapter 22

Windsor Locks' First Ambulance

In 1943, the newly formed Lions Club decided to donate an ambulance to the town of Windsor Locks. The town had never had an ambulance. Red Leary organized a small group of members to raise the funds to procure the ambulance. The group consisted of Thomas A. Grasso, Philip J. Koehler, Arthur F. Cannon and Fred J. Kervick. (Springfield Republican, November 13, 1943)



Windsor Locks' First Ambulance

Dan Kervick contacted me after he read my article about Red Leary, which mentioned the Lions Club project. Dan said that the Fred J. Kervick in my article was his father. Dan sent me the information about the Lions Club ambulance project on which this article is based.

When the Lions Club committee began a house-to-house drive to raise the necessary funds, each committee member was given a specific area to cover. Fred J. Kervick was assigned the area of Main Street, including the retail businesses on one side of the road, and the manufacturing plants on other. The reason that Mr. Kervick was given that area was because he owned a trucking business, and most of those businesses were regular customers of his.

In the canvassing of the rest of the town, most of the donations made by individuals were in the amount of one or two dollars. There were very few five and ten dollar donations from individuals. However, the mills came through in a big way. Horton Chuck, Montgomery, Medlicott, Clark, Rushmore, and Dexter all gave generously.

One of Mr. Kervick's customers in Hartford was the A. C. Hine Company, a Pontiac-Oldsmobile dealership. He spoke with Mr. Hine, and asked if he could help

Mr. Hine agreed to sell an ambulance to the Lions Club at his cost, but there was one provision. The Lions Club would have to pick up the ambulance in Boston when it was ready. After several meetings with Mr. Hine, they agreed on the equipment to be installed in the ambulance and on the price. According to Leslie Matthews Stansfield (*Images of America: Windsor Locks*, Acadia Press, 2003), they got a 1936 Oldsmobile, which cost \$1,650.

You may ask why they bought a 1936 ambulance in 1943. Why didn't they get a 1943 ambulance? The answer was that all manufacturing of automobiles had stopped when World War II began. New designs didn't start to be manufactured again until 1948.

When the ambulance had been fully outfitted with the requested equipment, and the Windsor Locks name and logo had been painted on it, Red Leary, Tom Grasso, Phil Koehler, Fred Kervick and Art Cannon drove to Boston to get it. Red Leary and Tom Grasso drove the ambulance back to Windsor Locks. Mr. Kervick, Mr. Cannon and Mr. Koehler returned in the vehicle they all went to Boston in.

When they arrived back in Windsor Locks, they parked the ambulance at the Police Department. As the word got out, many townspeople came by to view their new ambulance. Getting its first ambulance is a major milestone for any town. The vision and work of the men who made it happen should not be forgotten.

The Lions club had raised \$2567.05 to buy an ambulance. (*Springfield Republican*, July 22, 1944) The ambulance only cost \$1650. Credit for that accomplishment goes to the team of Leary, Koehler, Cannon, and Kervick.

A decade later, the Lions club did it again. They bought a 1953 Packard ambulance to replace the 1943 ambulance which they had bought for the town in 1943. That ambulance had been used 650 times (*Springfield Union*, May 22, 1953)

Chapter 23

Drum Corps of Windsor Locks

Through most of the 1900s, Windsor Locks had a number of Drum Corps. There are two levels of Drum Corps: Senior and Junior. The former are made up of adults, and the latter are made up of youths. They both march in the same parades, but when it comes to competitions, they do not compete against one another.

Drum corps descended from military bugle and drum units returning from World War I and succeeding wars. Traditionally, drum corps served as signaling units as early as before the American Civil War. With the invention of the radio, bugle signaling units became obsolete and surplus equipment. As a result, drum and bugle corps of civilians and veterans, and the corps performed in community events and local celebrations. This, in turn, evolved to drum corps as community groups.

This article covers the drum corps of Windsor Locks, both of the Senior and Junior types.

THE SENIOR DRUM CORPS OF WINDSOR LOCKS

Senior Drum Corps are limited to adult members. Windsor Locks has had four of them:

1. The Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps (1916 - 1924)
2. The "Old Timers Drum and Bugle Corps" (1919) which was mentioned in the Springfield Republican of Nov. 12, 1919. No other mention of the group was found.
3. The Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife and Drum Corps (1965 - 1991)
4. The Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps (1984 - 1991), which was an offshoot of the Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps.

Windsor Locks' first drum corps was called the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps. The August 20, 1916 issue of the Springfield Republican states: "The Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps, which has recently sprung into existence, is in Rockville, attending the state Drum Corps convention." There were a number of mentions of this drum corps in the newspapers in 1916, and they kept appearing until 1922. So we can assume that this group was in existence from about 1916 until about 1922. The following photograph of the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum and Bugle Corps, is the only known photograph of the group.



Windsor Locks Fife, Drum & Bugle Corps, 1916

Below is a photo of old uniforms from the 1916 drum corps, which are still on display in Windsor Locks at the Memorial Hall.



Uniforms of the Windsor Locks Fife, Drum & Bugle Corps, ~1920

The second senior Drum Corps from our town was the “Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife and Drum Corps”. It was organized in 1965, and its first appearance was at a celebration of the Windsor Locks Little League World

Championship in that year. The next photograph is of the Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps.



Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Department Fife & Drum Corps

This drum corps used fifes, snare drums and base drums, but no bugles. They practiced at the Union School. They used the “ancient” style of play which was based on a slow cadence of about 100 beats per minute. They marched in town parades, and participated in contests. They won many trophies which are now at the Fire Station.

Whenever the Fire Department's Drum Corps marched in a Fire Department Parade, they wore their Class A uniforms. Below is a rare photo of the one time that this that Fife and Drum Corps did not dress in their Class A uniforms. It was taken in 1991 in Deep River, CT on a day that was very hot, so they wore a lighter, more informal uniform. The Fire Department's Fife and Drum Corps was formed in 1965 and was active until about 1991. They did get together a few more times after that. One of those times was the 150th Anniversary of Windsor Locks in 2004.



Windsor Locks Firemans' Fife & Drum Corps, 1991

Members of the Fire Department's formed another Fife and Drum core in 1984. It was called the Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps. It was formed to march in parades that the Fire Department didn't or couldn't make. The most important of those was the 1985 parade in New Haven for Connecticut's 350th Anniversary. They loaded the old fire truck on a flat bed truck, and marched in that parade. They also played at Little League parades in town and other non-fire department parades.



Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps, 1985

Below is a photograph of this drum corps marching in the 350th Connecticut Anniversary in New London, Connecticut in 1956. The photos and information about the two Fire Department drum corps were provided by John Donohue.



Old Engine No. 2 Drum Corps, Conn. 350th Anniversary. New Haven, 1956

THE JUNIOR DRUM CORPS OF WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks had four junior (youth) drum corps in the 1950s and 1960s. All marched in local parades, and competed in nearby competitions. The first was the St. Mary's Drum Corps and Brigade Team, which was formed in October 1949 by Reverend Edward B. Conlon. The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954 says: "The organization has been aided by a series of top-flight trainers and musicians over the past five years, and has won many laurels. The misses Jacqueline Daly and Jane Pastamerlo are the present Majorettes in the Corps, and Miss Marilyn Barbieri is Majorette of the Brigade Drill Team." Below is a 1955 photo of the St. Mary's Drum Corps in St. Mary's Park, which is now known as Pesci Park.



*Fife & Drum Corps competition at St. Mary's Park, Windsor Locks, Conn.
St. Mary's Drum and Bugle Corps forms living rosary, about 1955*

Next is a 1956 photograph of two of their members, Mel and John Montemerlo, in uniform. The West wall of St. Mary's School is in the background. The group used the school and its grounds for its practice sessions.



**Mel and John Montemerlo, about 1956
Members of St. Mary's Drum Corps**

St. Mary's Drum Corps included fifes, drums and bugles. It was very active in the early 1950s, but no mention of them exists in local newspapers after 1958.

The Golden Lancers Drum Corps was started in 1958 by a young couple named Al and Mary Weatherbee, who lived on Litchfield Drive, near Southwest School. The original funding to get the drum corps started was donated by Ray Roncari. It funded the purchase of instruments, uniforms and a small, used bus. The bus was big enough for the group. It was reliable, and it got the group to and from Drum Corps "meets" (contests) in the nearby area. The group also marched in Windsor Locks parades. The next photo is of five members of the Golden Lancers.



Golden Lancers members.
Paul O'Donnell, Teddy Mitchell, Chick Belisle
Unidentified, Sharon Weatherbee

Next is a photo of the front section of the group in a Windsor Locks parade.

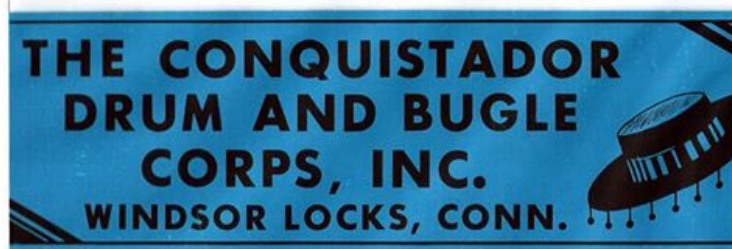


Golden Lancers in Windsor Locks parade.
Sharon Weatherbee, Robin Kaye

Al and Mary Weatherbee deserve a great deal of credit for forming and taking care of the Golden Lancers. The group's members will never forget the practices, the trips to competitions, an occasional stop at Friendly's for "Awful-Awfuls" and other ice cream treats. They even went on an excursion in the bus to the East Windsor Drive-in for a movie. Mr. and Mrs. Weatherbee were excellent leaders, teachers, and role models. Unfortunately the Golden Lancers Drum Corps only lasted from 1958 to 1961. Information about the Golden Lancers and photos were provided by Robin Kaye and Sharon Weatherbee. The author (Mel Montemerlo) was a member of the Golden Lancers.

The third junior Drum Corps in Windsor Locks existed from about 1960 to 1965. It was called the Cavaliers Junior Drum and Bugle Corps, and was sponsored by the Gens-Viola Post of the American Legion. Frank E. Merrigan was its director. There were 14 articles about it in Springfield Newspapers which cover Windsor Locks news. They dated from 1960 to 1964. A 1960 article said that they were going to raise money to pay for the annual costs of the group. The 1964 article in the Springfield Union said that it was going to be replaced by a "Marching and Maneuvering" drum and bugle corps which would be named the "Majestic Guardsmen Drum and Bugle Corps". However further information on either the Cavaliers or the Majestic Guardsmen could not be found.

There was a fourth Junior Drum Corps in Windsor Locks, called the Conquistador Drum and Bugle Corps, but little information could be found. The following old advertisement for the Conquistadors was posted on Facebook on September 9, 2016. Three people posted comments, saying they remembered it, but there was no information as to when it existed or who sponsored it. An internet search turned up two websites which included a listing of the Conquistador Drum and Bugle Corps or Windsor Locks, but neither had a date on it.



CONCLUSION

While the popularity of drum corps in the United States waned in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century, it was strong in the Northeastern States for most of the century. The existence of four junior drum corps and the four senior drum corps in Windsor Locks is a reflection of that. Drum corps gave our youth and our adults a fun and productive outlet for their creative energies for most of the century. But as the saying goes, "All good things must end sometime." Those groups are now memories. Hopefully, this chapter will help those memories live on.

Chapter 24

Windsor Locks Catastrophes

Introduction

While it is interesting and informative to read the pleasant parts of history, it is useful to review some of the bad things that have occurred, such as tornados, hurricanes, floods and fires. Such reflection allows us to think about what happened, and to determine if we are better prepared to handle similar things in the future. For example, the US government is now (2017) studying its policies on federal flood insurance. They have found that in some flood zones, the same houses have been rebuilt many times at government expense. (New York Times, Aug. 31, 1917 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/31/opinion/flood-insurance-program-.html>). One alternative being considered is to reduce incentives to rebuild in flood plains.

Let us consider the disasters that have befallen Windsor Locks.

Natural Disasters

1979 Tornado

On October 3, 1979, a tornado struck the area around Turnpike Road, near Bradley Field. It caused three deaths and 500 injuries. It was the ninth most destructive tornado in American history. There were no tornado watches or warnings issued before it struck. An American Airlines flight with 114 passengers was about to land as the tornado was passing the airport but the pilot was able to abort the landing in time. The tornado then hit the section of the airport where the New England Air Museum is located. More than 20 vintage aircraft were completely destroyed and many others were seriously damaged. Damage totals from the tornado were around \$200M in 1979 dollars. 65 homes were destroyed and more than 75 more were damaged. The winds reached 87 mph. (Wikipedia - "Windsor Locks Tornado"). Below you will find the front page of the Oct. 4, 1979 Morning Union newspaper from Springfield, Mass. While the words on the front page article are not readable, the photos and headlines indicate how bad the tornado was. That is followed by a photo of mangled aircraft at the Air Museum and a photo of badly damaged homes.



1979 Tornado destroyed houses

2013 Tornado

On July 1, 2013, Windsor Locks was hit by a second tornado that came in from the direction of the town of Windsor, where it picked up a lot of tobacco netting and dropped it in Windsor Locks. An EF1-category twister tore through the area of Windsor Locks and East Windsor between 1:30 and 1:45 p.m. According to the National Weather Service, the tornado reached wind speeds of up to 86 mph, was up to 200 yards wide and traveled 2.5 miles. The EF1 tornado knocked down trees and power lines, scattering tobacco cloth, and removing siding from houses. Damage was concentrated in the areas of East Windsor, Windsor Locks and Fairfield County. Information from:

<http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Tornado-Warning-in-Effect-for-Fairfield-County-213843351.html>



Damage from July 1, 2013 Windsor Locks Tornado.

Flood of March 1936

The 1936 flood was devastating to communities along its banks. Spring came early and caused the frozen Connecticut River to break up in to huge chunks of ice which dammed the river. When the massive dam burst, the banks of the river flooded towns and farms. Businesses, bridges, homes and roads were destroyed. Thousands were left homeless. Windsor Locks was hit hard, as the following photos show. In the next photo, notice the height of the flood water on the Montgomery building and its outbuildings.



Montgomery building during 1936 flood

In the following photo, the water has gone over the roadway on the bridge. The photo after the flooded bridge shows the Windsor Locks fire truck on a flooded street.



Windsor Locks Bridge during 1936 flood



Windsor Locks Fire Truck during 1936 Flood

1938 Hurricane

The 1938 hurricane was a strong Category 3 with peak wind gusts of 186 mph. Over 600 people in New England were killed. This was the worst hurricane to strike New England in the last 200 years. The damage in Windsor Locks was enormous, as the following article from the Springfield Republican newspaper shows.

Windsor Locks Hard Hit
Windsor Locks, Ct., provided a vivid story of the struggle against floodwaters. There the canal overflowed its east bank, pouring into the basements of the Medlicott company, C. H. Dexter & Sons and others. As waters rose, the east bank of the canal was finally dynamited north of the American Writing Paper company to allow the water to flow into the river, saving dynamos and machinery at other plants. The south end of the town was flooded and residents forced to leave as waters rose within two feet of the 1936 record. Damage from hurricane was estimated at \$250,000, with tremendous and unestimated losses from the flood. Electricity was restored to the business section yesterday and the Hartford-Springfield road was cleared. Phone service was almost nonexistent.

Springfield Republican
 Sept. 24, 1938 on Flooding

Please note in this article that it was the canal that overflowed its east bank, pouring water into the Montgomery building. Thus, any future attempts to keep the river from overflowing will have to be augmented by methods of keeping the canal from overflowing its banks. In the following photograph, you can see the flooding up against the Montgomery building. The photograph after that clearly shows the flood waters above the roadway on the bridge to Warehouse Point.



Windsor Locks, Connecticut, after 1938 hurricane.



Bridge after 1938 hurricane. Windsor Locks, CT

The following photos show the damages caused by wind during the hurricane.



Freight Station after 1938 hurricane

Windsor Locks Flood of 1955

Hurricane Connie dropped five to ten inches of rain in portions of northwest Connecticut on August 12, 1955. Connie barely produced any wind in Connecticut as it moved to the West, but it dropped enough rain to saturate the soil and raise river levels above flood stage. Five days after Connie, Hurricane Diane dropped 10 to 20 inches of rain in Connecticut. When preceded by Connie's five to ten inches of rain, Diane's record 24 hour rainfall was enough to push rivers to levels that hadn't been seen in hundreds of years. In Windsor Locks, Hurricane Connie dropped 7.74 inches of rain, and then Hurricane Diane dropped 10.86 inches for a total of 18.42" in five days.

Information from: <http://www.ryanhanrahan.com/flood-of-august-1955/>

The greatest damage from these two hurricanes was in Connecticut, where floods affected about two-thirds of the state. It was the largest flood on record in the state's history. All major streams and valleys were flooded during the storm. The Connecticut River at Hartford reached the third-highest level on record at the time, cresting at 30.6 feet above flood stage. Although there was rural damage, the city of Hartford was spared from flooding due to previously constructed dykes.

Information from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Diane

Windsor Locks Flood of 1984

The New York Times, on May 31, 1984, said: "The hardest-hit area was Connecticut, where forecasters said the flooding could turn out to be the worst in 30 years. The Connecticut River was expected to hit 28 feet at Hartford, 12 feet above flood stage, and officials said it would probably keep rising. In 1955, in one of the worst floods on record, the Connecticut crested at 30.5 feet."

At the end of River Rd. in Windsor Locks, there is a pole on which the heights of previous flood levels are posted. It can be seen in the next photo that the four highest levels ever recorded were floods of 1936, 1938, 1984 and 1955. Those were in order of descending height. The following photo of the pole showing the heights of past floods in Windsor Locks shows that what the New York Times predicted, actually came to be. The height of the flood of 1984 was about the same height as the flood of 1955, which was the third highest on record in Windsor Locks. There is another shorter pole, closer to the river which also lists notable high water marks of: April 2005, April 1996, April 1993, June 1989, May 2001, and July 1973. It is worth noting that these tend to occur in Spring or in the beginning of Summer.



Flood height levels, River Rd. Windsor Locks

Fires

ABC Market - fire in 1925

When the ABC market burned down, it was replaced by the Brown Derby. See the following photograph of the ABC Market, which was taken before the fire.



ABC Market

The market on Main Street was a partnership of 'Red' Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr. Ambrosetti was the grocer and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. This photo was taken in 1923. The business was a total loss after a 1925 fire. The site was rebuilt as the Brown Derby, which stood until redevelopment.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Colli, J. B. Colli's daughter.

Joe (Red) Ambrosetti's Market, Main St., Windsor Locks, CT 1923

Blanche's Bowling Alley and the Princess Theater

Blanch's Bowling Alley was a small place. It had four lanes, and no automatic pin setters. It was a good, cheap place to spend some time. It was located at the bottom of Grove Street hill. It was operated by Blanche (Bianchi) Lavigne. The top of that building had been unoccupied for a long time. There had been a movie theater there in the early 1900s, which had been called the Palace Theater for a while, and then it was called the Princess Theater. It ceased operation as a theater prior to 1929. (October 20, 1929 issue of The Springfield Republican).

The building caught fire on February 6, 1972. The fire gutted the inside of the building, which was never repaired. The building remained closed until it was demolished.

Below are three photos. The first is an early photo of the building before the fire. It is followed by a photo of the fire, and another of the building after the fire.



***Ferrari family in front of Blanche's
Bowling Alley, Grove St. 1926***



***Blanche's Bowling Alley Burns. Grove St.
Princess Theater was on top floor.***



Blanche's Bowling Alley after the fire.

Bidwell's Lumber Yard fire - 1958

Here are two photos of the fire at Bidwell Lumber Yard. The first was taken during the fire, and the second was taken after it.



Bidwell Lumber Fire - 1958



Bidwell Lumber Co. fire, 1958

Bidwell Block Fire 1960

This fire was reported by a telephone operator in the Telephone Company building on Spring St. at about 3AM. She said that she saw the building hit by a bolt of lightning. Two firemen were hurt while battling the blaze. The following newspaper clipping describes the fire. The photo shows the aftermath of the fire in one of the upper rooms of the building.



Hartford Times, Sept. 20, 1960,



Bidwell Block fire, 1960

Shonty's Restaurant - 1967 Fire

The paragraph under the second photo tells the story. Following are three photos. They are of Shonty's before the fire, during the fire and after the fire. The entire block of buildings from Grove Street to the driveway going up to Coly's Hotel was destroyed, both the lower and upper floors, including Sy's News Stand.



From right to left: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Coly's Hotel.
At right is corner of Grove St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn



WINDSOR LOCKS—A two-story building at Main Street housing Shorty's Restaurant, Sy's Newsstand and 10 individuals living in apartments was ruined yesterday in a fire that broke out at 7 a.m. Although firefighters felt they had the blaze contained within 30 minutes after the alarm, Chief William G. Reilly said the fire was not under control until noon. Loss was estimated at \$25,000. Owner of the building is Benjamin Chmura. Cause of the fire has not been determined.



Shonty's, after 1967 Fire

3.6 - The Mather Block Fire in 1924

Below is a postcard of the Mather Block. It was at the South corner of the corner of Main and Spring Streets. According to a story in a 1924 Windsor Locks Journal, the Mather Block burned, but not completely. That included the bank, and the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co., which was owned by Leo Colapietro. No photos of the fire could be found.



Mather Block (see arrow), burned in 1924

3.7 - Montgomery Co. Building Fire in July 2006

Below is a photo of the Montgomery building during the fire in July 2006. The important thing to notice is that the closest that the fire truck could get to the building was Main St. It had to shoot water over to the fire from Main St. Between the fire truck and the fire was the railroad tracks, the canal and a small road.



J.R. Montgomery factory fire, July 2006

3.8 - Coly's Hotel Fire in 1926

Vito Colapietro bought a hotel from Mr. Byrnes in 1917. The hotel burned down as it was being refurbished in 1926. Below is a newspaper clipping about the fire. It contains an error. It says "Hotel Brusi," but it was the "Hotel Byrnes". Vito Colapietro bought it from Mr. Byrnes in 1913. Notice in the next two photos how Coly Hotel went from a wooden exterior with a Mansard roof to a stucco building after the fire.

<p>Hotel Brusi Guttled With Estimated Loss of \$15,000—Help Summoned From Warehouse Point</p> <p>Windsor Locks, Ct., Nov. 24—The three upper floors of the Hotel Brusi, a wooden building, were badly gutted by fire here last night, with a loss estimated at \$15,000. The hotel was unoccupied at the time, as it was undergoing extensive repairs by the owner, Cino Colapietro. The former proprietor, Fred C. Brusi, terminated his lease some time ago. The fire is thought to have originated around a stove used to heat the building while the repairs were under way.</p>	<p>One fireman was overcome by smoke and three others were slightly injured when a ladder broke.</p> <p>The fire department fought the blaze for over four hours, but finally had it under control at 1.30 this morning. Assistance was given by the Warehouse Point fire department. Many thousands of gallons of water were poured into the building from six streams.</p> <p>The ground floor of the hotel contained a shoe store conducted by the owner of the building, and also a men's furnishing store known as the Boston store, conducted by Paul Aronson. A third store on the ground floor had been conducted as a restaurant in connection with the hotel, but has not been in operation since the hotel was closed.</p>
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Springfield Republican, November 24, 1926



Coly's Hotel (see arrow) prior to 1927 Fire, about 1922



Coly's Hotel (on left) after 1927 fire and reconstruction

Syd's Modern Drug Fire in May 1965

The first photo shows Syd's Modern Drug store before the fire. Next there is a Hartford Courant article about the fire, followed by a photo of firemen fighting the blaze.



Modern Drug (on right) prior to 1965 fire



DRUG STORE DAMAGED: Fire Sunday morning caused extensive damage to the interior of Modern Drugs, 158 Main St., Windsor Locks, and tied up church traffic for two hours. The alarm was turned in at 6:20 a.m. by Policeman Ted Fisher, who saw smoke coming from the store. The store's owner, Sidney Portnoy, estimates damage

to the store and the second floor stockroom at \$60,000. The fire was put out by the Windsor Locks Fire Department within an hour, but the clean-up job kept equipment on Main Street over four hours. Church traffic was re-routed by the Police Department (Ruggiero Photo).

Modern Drug Fire, Hartford Courant, May 31, 1965



Modern Drug fire, May 31, 1965

Conclusion

This article has reviewed the major catastrophes that have occurred in Windsor Locks over the past century. They included natural disasters (tornados, hurricanes, floods) and fires. Thirty photographs and newspaper clippings were presented. There were also two tornados.

All of the fires we looked at were in buildings built from about 1900 to 1940. They were built before the existence of strong building codes. One of the goals of the redevelopment of Main was to eliminate those old buildings which were considered to be "fire traps".

As for floods, Windsor Locks had four major floods in the last century. The portion of Windsor Locks near the river, which includes the Montgomery Building, is on a "100 year flood plain," which means that one flood per century can be expected. Windsor Locks got four in that time frame. Windsor Locks has always survived these floods. Only a very small portion of the town gets flooded. It is important to note that in the 1938 flood, the water that flowed into the Montgomery factory came from the overflowing banks of the canal, which moved down towards the river.

Very few lives have been lost in Windsor Locks through catastrophes. However, it is worthwhile to keep past disasters and our responses in mind. As the great philosopher, Santayana, said, "Those who are ignorant of history, are condemned to repeat it." If we have come up with solutions to past problems, it is also useful to revisit those solutions to see if they really worked as hoped, or if better solutions are available.

Chapter 25

Leo Montemerlo's Map of Downtown Windsor Locks Businesses

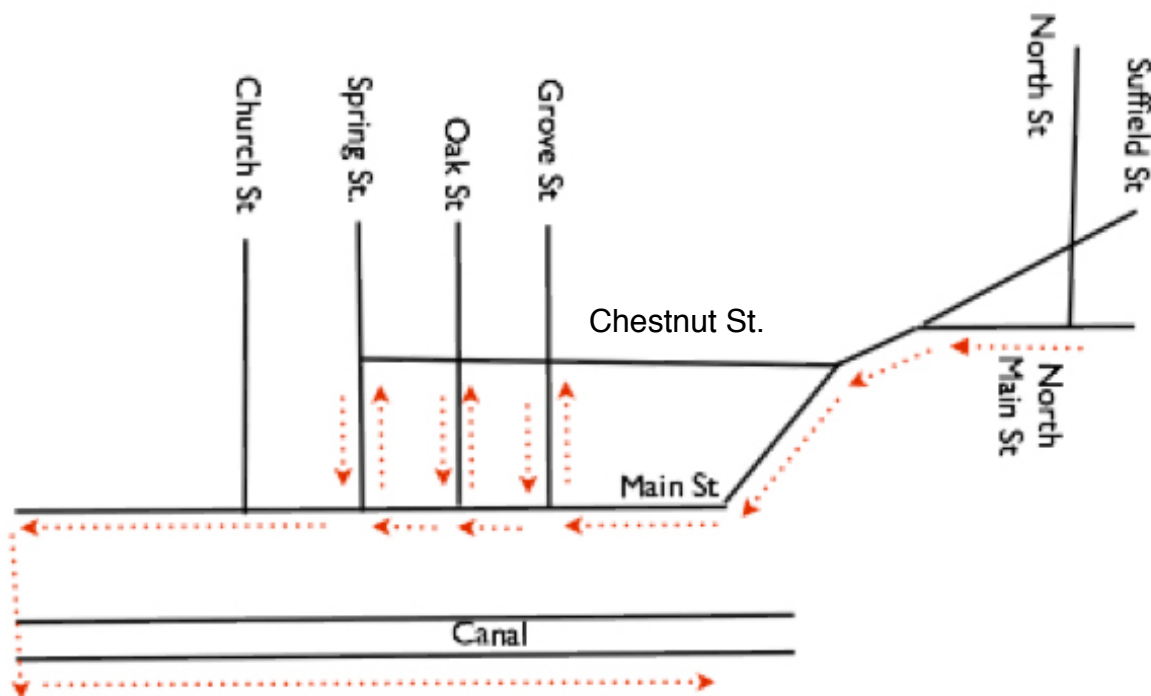


Leo Montemerlo (1915-2010)

In 2003, when he was 88 years old, Leo Montemerlo sat down on his couch and made a list of businesses in downtown Windsor Locks. The list was handwritten on eight pieces of paper. It first came to my attention in March of 2016. After studying the list, it was clear that these businesses did not all exist at the same time. The list was not in chronological order. Rather, it was in the order that you would see the businesses if you walked a certain path through downtown Windsor Locks. In his mind, Leo “took a walk” down Main Street from North Street to the Ashmere Inn, and then came back to his starting going by walking along the line of mills beside the canal. He took three little “side trips” as he walked down Main St. When he got to Grove Street, he took a right and went up the hill to Chestnut, and then came back to Main Street. He did the same thing when he got to Oak Street, and again when he got to Spring Street. As he took this “walk,” he wrote down the names of 77 businesses that he passed. In four cases, he listed businesses that occupied the same location at different times.

In other words, he made a map of the locations of 77 businesses in 73 locations, even though those businesses existed at different times in his life, from the early 1920s to the 1960s. This could be the only map anyone has ever made with regard to location, but without regard for time. His mind’s systematic traverse through the downtown business area was quite ingenious. He focussed on businesses that he worked at, or dealt with, or knew the owners of. This list/map turns out to be a useful and enjoyable historical document. Many of the business names that he listed were fascinating: the Princess Theater, Central Hall, the Beehive Building, Beltrandi’s, Garbarino’s Ice Cream Store, a Chinese Laundry, and Katz’s Junkyard.

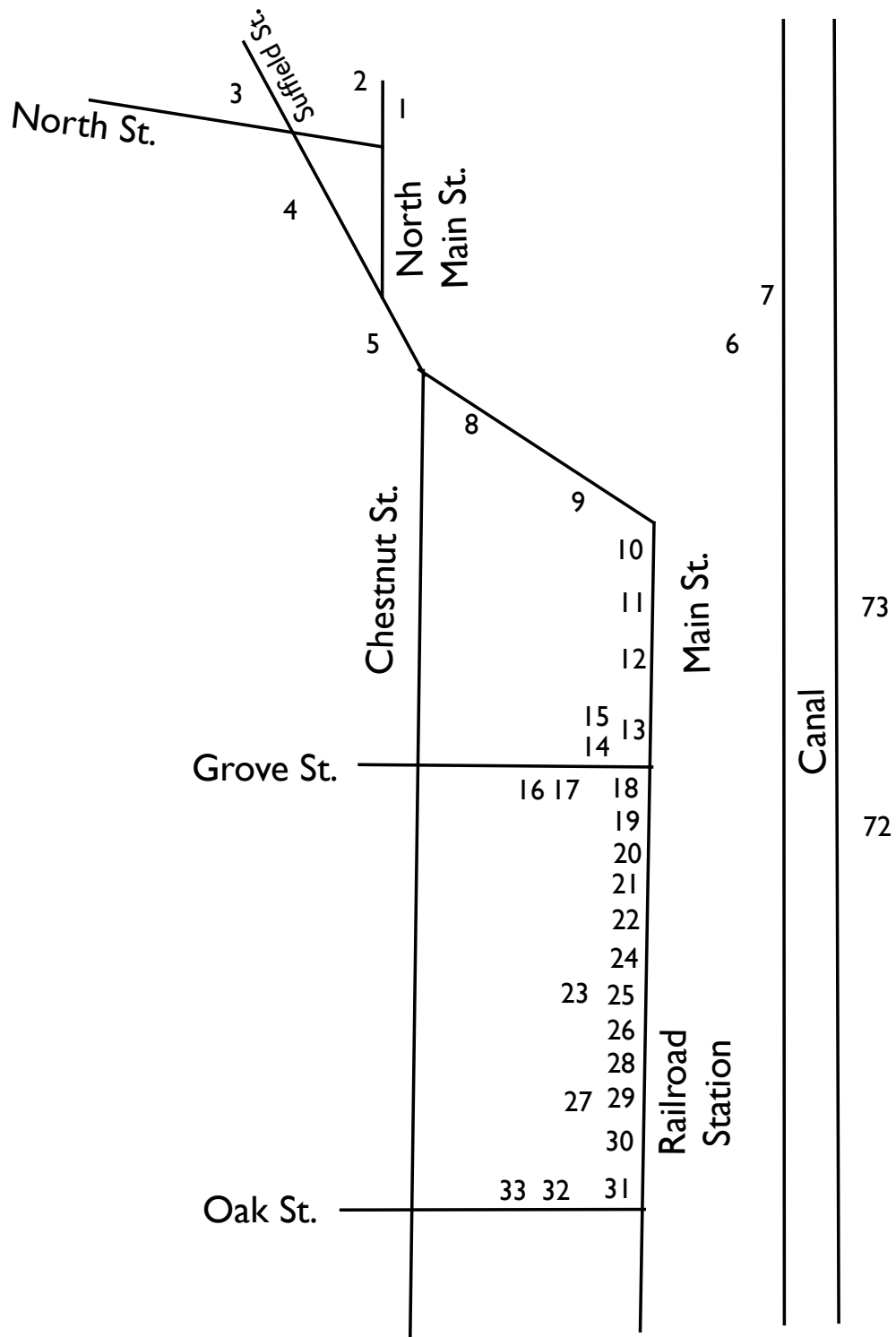
This article is the result of research on the 77 businesses in Leo’s list. To present this information, we will retrace the mental “walk” that he took through downtown Windsor Locks, and provide information and photographs on each of the businesses. The dotted red arrows in the following map show the path he took.



Three things will bring Leo's list to life: The first is a two-page map which gives the location of the 77 businesses that he listed. This map is found on the next two pages. The second is a numbered list of the 77 businesses with descriptive information and photos. The third is the information and photographs that are presented for each so that it which can be easily referred while reading the article. It would be useful for the reader to make a copy of the two-page map so that it can be easily referred to while reading the chapter.

In four cases, Leo listed two businesses which occupied the same location at different times. The first example is of the ABC Market, which was destroyed by fire, and replaced by the The Brown Derby. The ABC Market is the 12th business in his list, so it was given the number "12," which appears on the map. The Brown Derby was given the number "12A". The map only shows the number 12. Both business 12 and 12A were in the same location.

The next two pages are the map, with the numbered locations of the businesses. The map provides the locations of the businesses in the list. This chapter contains 58 photos, images and diagrams of the Windsor Locks that existed from the early 1900s through about 1970.



The organization of this article will be to break the map into the following Sections:

- I. From the corner of North Main and North Streets, go south on Main St. to Grove St.
- II. Go up Grove St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St.
- III. Main St., go south from Grove St. to Oak St.
- IV. Go up Oak St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St.
- V. Main St., go south from Oak St. to Spring St.
- VI. Go up Spring St. hill to Chestnut St., and back down to Main St.
- VII. Main St., go south from Spring St., as far as the Ashmere Inn.
- VII. Go north along the canal, where the manufacturing plants are to the American Writing Paper Co.

I. From Corner of North Main & North Streets, go south on Main St. to Grove St.

1. Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia - From our starting point, we can see the office and home of Dr. Ettore Carniglia and his wife, Blanche, on North Main St.



Dr. Ettore F Carniglia 1904 - 1970



2. Park Chevrolet was located at 6 North Main St. It was not far from Dr. Carniglia's house. Leo Montemerlo bought his beloved 1951 Chevy from Jack Quagliaroli's dealership. See the advertising "coin" to the right of the photo of Dr. Carniglia.

3. Windsor Locks Lumber Co - was located on North St., just west of Suffield St. In their time, the only two places to buy wood and building supplies in Windsor Locks were Windsor Locks Lumber and Bidwell Lumber.

4. Carroll's Pharmacy, 18 Suffield St. This was not only a pharmacy, but also an Ice Cream Shop. The cones didn't cost much, and they were good. Dr. Carniglia gave certificates to his young patients, which could be exchanged for an ice cream cone at Carroll's.



Charles Carroll between his grandfather, James P. Carroll Sr. (left) and his father, James P. Carroll, Jr (right), in Carroll's Pharmacy, Circa 1955

5. F. S. Bidwell Lumber Co. was located on the West side of Main St., just north of the brook between the corner of Chestnut St. and Main St. This was half of the Bidwell business enterprise in Windsor Locks. The other half was their hardware store on Main St, just above the Carlisle store.



Bidwell Lumber Fire - 1958

6. **Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard** was where Windsor Locks Commons is in 2016.



Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard

7. **Old Graveyard** - This was not a business, but Leo had it on his list. There are still gravestones and fragments of gravestones there, dated from 1861 to 1876. The location is just behind Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard.

8. **The old Windsor Locks Post Office** was on the West side of Main St., just north of the second location that Syd's Modern Drug store was in.

9. **Mr. Tate, the Photographer.** The Tate house had a distinctive look. Mr. Tate was a photographer.



Larry Ferrari in front of Tate House. Main St. Windsor Locks. Mr Tate was a photographer.

10. Beltrandi's - 252 Main St. This was a place where you could go to shoot pool or play cards.

11. Jenkins Shoe Store - was listed on the 1913 Map of Windsor Locks, which read: "Jenkins, Alfred. Boots, Shoes & Rubbers. Main St."

12. A B C Grocery Store - This store was a partnership of Joe "Red" Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr Ambrosetti was the grocer, and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. See the photo below. The store burned to the ground in a 1925 fire. It was rebuilt as the Brown Derby.



ABC Market

The market on Main Street was a partnership of 'Red' Ambrosetti, Frank Barberi, and John B. Colli. Mr. Ambrosetti was the grocer and Mr. Barberi and Mr. Colli were the butchers. This photo was taken in 1923. The business was a total loss after a 1925 fire. The site was rebuilt as the Brown Derby, which stood until redevelopment.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Colli, J. B. Colli's daughter.

Joe (Red) Ambrosetti's Market, Main St., Windsor Locks, CT 1923

12A. The Brown Derby - John Romanofsky (1914-1968) was the owner.

13. The Beehive Building - The "Beehive Building" was a nickname of a large apartment house at the north corner of Grove and Main Streets. The nickname did not refer to the looks of the building, but to the fact that it was made of a lot of very small apartments, and the building always had a lot of "action" going on - as does the interior of a beehive. It was owned by Mr. Shea. A Mr. Botasso owned a meat market on the bottom floor. The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later this piece of land had Red Leary's store on it. Over the years, it has changed hands a number of times. See the following photo.



MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN. *Photo taken in 1925*

Edwin P. Eagan

Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.

Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor

13A. Red Leary's hardware and appliance store. Red Leary's first business was a gas station. Later he opened a hardware and appliance store on the corner of Grove and Main Streets in the building that replaced the Bee Hive Building. Later, this space housed a Western Auto store. Still later, the Western Auto store moved to the North corner of Main and Oak Streets, and was owned by Don LaRussa.



Elmer "Red" Leary's Hardware & Appliance Store, corner Grove & Main

II. Go Up the Grove St. hill to Chestnut St., and back down to Main St.

As you are walking south on Main St. and reach Grove St., take a right and walk up the hill. It is interesting to note that this Grove St. hill used to be known as "Cork Hill".

14. Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley -

This was a low cost way to spend an evening. It had real pin boys. The bowling alley was destroyed by fire. See the following photo.



*Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley destroyed by fire.
Princess Theater (old) was on top floor.*

15. Princess Theater Leo's notes stated that you could see two movies and get a lollipop for seven cents. The Princess Theater was upstairs from Blanche's Bowling Alley. See newspaper clipping above.

The two moving picture houses that have been operated in competition for some time have been combined. Hereafter the pictures will be shown only in the **Princess theater** and the show in the Burnap opera house will be closed. George J. Rice of Thompsonville and M. Weiner of Hartford will manage the **theater**.

**Jan. 5, 1914,
Springfield Republican**

Now we go across Grove St. and start back down the hill toward Main St.

16. Preli's Italian Grocery Store - Bartholomew (Bart) Preli had great homemade salami and sausages and a wide supply of Italian food supplies. The 1913 map of Windsor listed: "Preli, B. Foreign & Domestic Groceries. Pure Italian Olive Oil, Fruits & Confectionery. Grove St." Preli's Market operated until about 1940. See photo below.



Preli's Grocery Store, 24 Grove Street, Windor Locks, Connecticut 1920's

17. Chinese Laundry - was in the two story building that was above Shonty's Restaurant. The entrance to the apartments was on Grove St. That was verified by Noreen Baron, whose grandparents lived there. Noreen's mother told her about the Chinese laundry which had been there.



From left to right: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Coly's Hotel. Chinese Laundry was over Shonty's. Entrance was from Grove St, and was on the second floor, where the balcony is.

III. Main St.- Go South from Grove St. to Oak St.

18. Shonty's Bar and Restaurant - Shonty's restaurant and bar was around for a long time. Unfortunately it burned down in 1967 in a fire that gutted the entire building, including the apartments on the second floor, and Sy Bianchi's News stand at the South end of the building in the previous photo.

19. Bianchi's Restaurant and Bar - Bianchi's was a good family restaurant in the downtown area. Their prices were reasonable. The food was good. See previous photo.

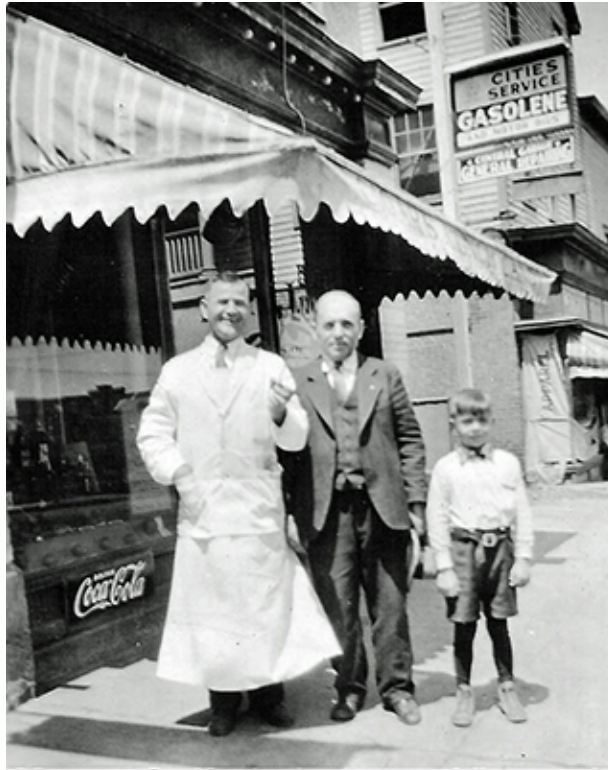
20. Moses Goldfarb Clothing store - Mr. Goldfarb opened his clothing store after 1913, but before 1922. There was an article in the May 31, 1922, issue of the

<p>GOLDFARB IDENTIFIES PROPERTY AS HIS OWN</p> <p>This Leads Police to Think Kozryn May Have Been Involved in Break</p> <p>Windsor Locks, May 30—Recovery of a considerable amount of the goods stolen from the Windsor Locks department store a week ago is believed to be an outcome of the arrest of Joseph Kozryn in Hartford. Suspected of bootlegging last week, Kozryn was taken into custody in Hart-</p>	<p>ford, but not until Sunday did the officers succeed in locating his rooming place. There they found considerable property that is believed to have been stolen. When the officers made a search of his room they found many suits of clothes, several bags and suit cases, some jewelry, trousers, shirts, some other goods that later were identified by Moses Goldfarb, proprietor of the store, as having been stolen in the break that was made there last week.</p> <p>Kozryn is being held by the Hartford police pending further investi-</p>
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Moses Goldfarb store robbed, 1922

Springfield Republican describing how police caught a man who had been taking clothes from store. See following newspaper article.

21. Moses Goldfarb's rooms for rent - Mr. Goldfarb had rooms or rent on the second floor of building, over Bianchi's restaurant and his clothing store. See photo below.



***Moses Golfarb, between Vito and
Leo Colapietro. 1932. Rooming
House has open window***

22. Sy Bianchi's News stand - Sy Bianchi had a newsstand on the South side of Bianchi's Restaurant. He was an avid New York Yankees Fan. Once, after the Yankees lost the World Series, his friends draped the storefront in black. Between Sy's store and Coly's Hotel was a driveway. The driveway was the way up to the rooms that Mr. Goldfarb rented, to the Mid-Town Motors garage, and to the back of Coly's hotel, where the hotel parking lot was.

23. Coly's Hotel - 182 Main St. Leo Montemerlo noted in his list that you could get a room at Coly's hotel for \$14 per week, but he didn't say when that was possible. Leo worked evenings in Vito Colapietro's store at the Main St. level after he married Vito's daughter, Lena. Vito bought the hotel from Mr. Byrnes in 1917. It burned down in 1927, but Vito rebuilt it immediately and it operated until the redevelopment of Main St. See photo on next page.

There were three stores under the hotel at Main St. level. Vito rented one of them from Mr. Byrnes before he bought the hotel. There was a lot of turnover in those three stores over the decades. The three that Leo put in his list were: Spinelli's Grocery Store, Bianchi's Shoe Store and Bill Amstead's Package store.



Central Hall Building (dark building on left) housed SNET Office, Garbarino's, A&P, boxing & basketball gym.
Coly's Hotel (light building on right) housed Spinelli Grocery, Bianchi Shoe Store, Amsted's Package Store.

24. Spinelli's Grocery Store - Mr. Spinelli had an old fashioned Italian Grocery store in the slot closest to Sy Bianchi's News Stand. Later this was Tony's Soda Shoppe. See photo above.

25. Mondo Bianchi Shoe Store was in the middle slot. The Bianchi family had four businesses in downtown Windsor Locks: Blanche's Bowling Alley, Sy's News Stand, Bianchi's Restaurant and Bar, and Armando Bianchi's shoe store. See Coly Hotel photo above.

26. Bill Amstead's Package Store had the slot closest to the A&P. We now call them "ABC stores", but back then, they were referred to as Package Stores. See Coly Hotel photo above.

27. Central Hall building - The building extended from Coly's hotel to Oak St. and had two floors. It was called "The Central Hall building". Upstairs was a large room that was used for basketball games and for boxing. Two of the Marconi brothers, Angelo and Louie were known to have boxed here. The floor of the boxing/basketball room had springs in the floor to make it bounce for dances and other events. Central Hall was previously called "the Burnap Block". At that time, it housed the Bernap Opera House. There was a movie theater in the building at one time, but it shut down in 1914. See the following photo of D. F. LaRussa's store and the A&P to see where Central Hall and the Bernap Opera House were located. After Central Hall was demolished, the two stores in the photo below were built.



Corner of Oak and Main. Don La,Russa's Appliance store, and the A&P. LaRussa originally had his Western Auto Store here. Previously the Central Hall Building occupied both spaces

28. SNET office in Central Hall Building. SNET was Southern New England Telephone. It was founded in 1878.

29. Garbarino's - 176 Main St. Garbarino's sold ice cream, fruit and groceries, as did the other ice cream stores on Main Street. It was located in the Central Hall Building. See newspaper clipping below:

WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks, Dec. 26—An automobile driven by George Klezos of Hazardville, who had Joseph Urbanowski of Suffield as a passenger, collided with one driven by John M. Clifford of Brooklyn, N. Y., on the overpass in the south part of town about 1 yesterday morning with slight damage to both cars. All three persons received cuts on the head and face from flying glass. Officer Caffrey ordered all three to appear in court Monday night.

The fruit store conducted by D. Garbarino in the Central hall block was broken into last night and about \$6 and some merchandise stolen. Entrance was gained by breaking the protecting shield on a rear window and lowering the top half. No arrests have been made.

Springfield Union, 12-27-1929

30. A&P Grocery - The A&P was the large, centrally located grocery store in Windsor Locks. Jack Redmond had an excellent column on the history of the A&P. The first location of the A&P was in the Zaccheo building opposite the bridge on Main St. It occupied the entire first floor of the building. Then it moved to another site on the Coogan Block, and finally moved to its well-known location across from the Railroad Station. See photo on previous page.

31. Western Auto Store - This store was owned by Don LaRussa, and it became the first D. F. LaRussa appliance store.

IV. Go up the Oak St. hill to Chestnut St, and back down to Main St

Turn right and head up the hill on Oak St. On the right is:

32. The Oak Street Market - This was more commonly referred to as "Aldo's," as it was owned and operated by Aldo Sartirana. See the following photo. Before Aldo had this store, it was a market owned by Joe Borracci, whose family lived above the store.



Oak St. Market. Aldo Sartirana & Tony Campinosi

33. The Old Fire Station - this building is now the site of the Senior Citizens Club. It was just up the hill from the Oak Street Market.

Now cross Oak St, and walk back down the hill to Main St.

V. Main St. - Go South from Oak St. to Spring St.

Having walked down Oak St. hill and arrived at Main St, take a right and walk south.

34. Allen Pease Co., 158 Main St. The Allen Pease Co. was listed in the 1913 Windsor Locks map as selling house furnishings, plumbing & hot water heating. The Windsor Locks Journal issue of April 1, 1928, says that the Allen Pease Co observed its 56 years at the same location on Main St under the same management. The business was started in 1873 by Allen Pease and a brother with a tinware shop. Later they constructed the 3-story Main St building. Mr Pease ran the company with his sons Howard and Frank.

See photo below. The Pease building was where Modern Drug is in that photo.

34A. Kamin's Department Store - (See 34 on map. Kamin's was at the same location as 34.) The Pease Building was on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Later it became the Kamin Department Store. An article in the Tuesday, May 25, 1954 shows that Graziano Graziani gave a five year lease to Morris Kamin et al. for Kamin's Department Store at the corner of Main and Oak Streets. Later Syd's Modern Drug Co store was on the ground floor of that building. See photo below.



Allen Pease Co , founded in 1873 South corner of Oak and Main. Here the location has the "Modern Drug" sign. Mr. Graziani leased the building to Morris Kamin and it became Kamin's Department Store (1954)

35. Wong Chinese Laundry

- The photo below shows a sign saying "Wong". It was taken during the parade for the Memorial Hall dedication on June 10, 1891. Looking at this photo, you can see the railroad station is just to the left, indicating that the photo was taken from the upper floor of a building on Main St., near the corner of Oak and Main. In other words, the photo was taken from the Pease Building. Now we know where Wong's Chinese Laundry was.



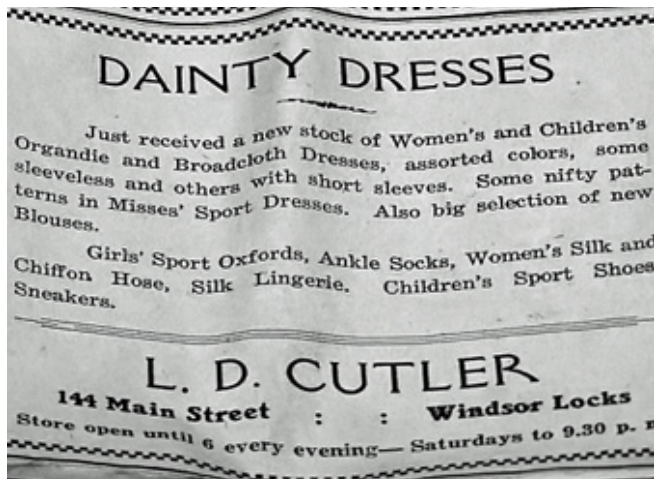
36. Rialto Theater - 154 Main St. - The Rialto Theater opened in 1922. It was owned by Leo Viola and Dominic Alfano. It was operated by Dave Magliora. See photo of the Rialto, Swede's Jewelers and Syd's Modern Drug on the previous page.

37. Donut Kettle - The Donut Kettle had many "regulars" for breakfast and for lunch. It was not open for dinner. See the following photo. The food was simple but good and the prices were right. John and Vic Sasali kept the restaurant going until the redevelopment of Main St., when they sold the store and its name. Shari Wadsworth was a waitress at the Donut Kettle. She bought the name and some of the equipment and opened a Donut Kettle at 482 Spring St. Later she sold the business to Angelo D'Aleo, who refurbished it, and re-opened it as the "Gathering Ground".



Between Spring & Oak Streets. Donut Kettle at right.

38. L. D. Cutler's - The 1913 Windsor Locks map had a listing which read: "Cutler, L. D. Jeweler and Optician. P. O. Block, Main St." See the two photos below. The L.D.Cutler advertisement in the May 4,1934 Windsor Locks Journal shows that Cutler's then sold women's and children's clothes, shoes and sneakers. Later, Swede's Jewelers occupied this spot.



Ad in May 4, 1934 Windsor Locks Journal



39. Marconi Brothers Luncheonette (also known as Wuzzy's) was at 130 Main St. Its phone number was NA3-7465. John, Louis and Angelo (Wuzzy) were the Marconi brothers. This was an iconic ice cream store that also sold sandwiches, soups, etc. It had booths in the back and was a popular teenage hangout. See the following photo.



Interior of "Wuzzy's"
Marconi Brothers Luncheonette

VI. Go up Spring St. hill to Chestnut St. and come back to Main St.

40. Umberto Pesci's Shoe Repair Shop - Leo Montemerlo's notes said: "Main St. , Umberto Pesci Shoe Shop, Old Library Upstairs." The shoe repair shop was on the lower level of the building on the north corner of Spring and Main Streets. The door to the shoe repair shop was the 2nd door to the building on Spring St. See photo below. The next photo is a 1927 photo of Mr. Pesci's shop. Leo Montemerlo, who worked there when he was 12 years old, got \$3 a week for 2 hours of work each day after school.



Corner of Spring and Main. Post Office on first floor.
Library upstairs. Umberto Pesci's Shoe Repair on first floor



Umberto Pesci, Fidelio Giannuzzi, Eddie Cappa, Leo Montemerlo (age 12)
Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1927

From 1920 to 1955, the Windsor Locks Public Library was on the second floor of the building on that corner. The entrance to the library was on Spring St. Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was on this corner at a later time.

41. Angelo Gatti, Tailor - was listed in 1913 map of Windsor Locks. It said: "Ladies' and Gents' Tailor. Spring St." See photo below.



Angelo Gatti, Tailor, Spring St.

42. Pastori's Cleaners - No information or photos could be found.

43. Windsor Locks Journal Office - The old Main St. was the heart of Windsor Locks. The Windsor Locks Journal was the soul of Windsor Locks. It only came out once a week, but was the record of our accomplishments - both big and small. It told us what happened last week and reminded us what happened in the past. See photo below.



Windsor Locks Journal Office, Spring St. Built 1907

44. Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop - In the days before Nike and Adidas athletic shoes, leather shoes were taken to Tony Basile's shop to get heels and soles replaced. It was across the street from St. Mary's Catholic church. There was a saying that Windsor Locks was the only town in the United States in which 99% of wedding snapshots had a shoe repair shop in the background. That would be Tony's shop.



*Interior of Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop.
At left is Tony Basile. At right is Tony Dipinto.*

At the top of the hill is Chestnut St. Johnny Cappa's Market is on your right

45. Johnny Cappa's Market - Kids who grew up in Windsor Locks' downtown area in the 1940s and 50s spent a lot of time at Johnny's but not much money. It was the place to go for penny candy. Parents sent their kids there for a loaf of bread or other things needed for lunch or dinner. There were always bicycles lying on the sidewalk in front of Johnny's. Johnny's was a Windsor Locks "institution" in the same sense that Wuzzy's was. It was unique and it was a favorite.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT



Windsor Locks Journal ad, May 4, 1934

Now cross Spring St, take a left, and head back towards Main St.

46. Windsor Locks Bakery Shop - The Tambussi brothers ran this shop which provided excellent bread, cakes, cookies and everything you could expect from a small town bakery. A 1934 ad for the bakery is on the previous page

47. Maria's Market - Maria and Pat Casinghino ran an Italian market across the street from the Windsor Locks Journal office. The fact that there were four Italian markets in such close proximity (Maria's, Aldo's, Johnny Cappa's and Bart Preli's), indicates that there was a large Italian community in the area.

48. DiPinto Barber Shop - Sandy DiPinto was a barber for over 30 years, after which he was a custodian at Windsor Locks High School for ten years.

49. Edward's Beauty Shop - Edward Topor was the owner/operator. After the "re-development" of Main Street, he moved his shop to his home on Circle Drive.

VII. Main St.- Go South from Spring St. to the Ashmere Inn.

When you reach Main St, take a right, and head south. The first thing you see will be:

50. The First National Bank - was one of the longest lasting and most well known institutions in the town. See photo below. The bank is to the right of Carlisle's.



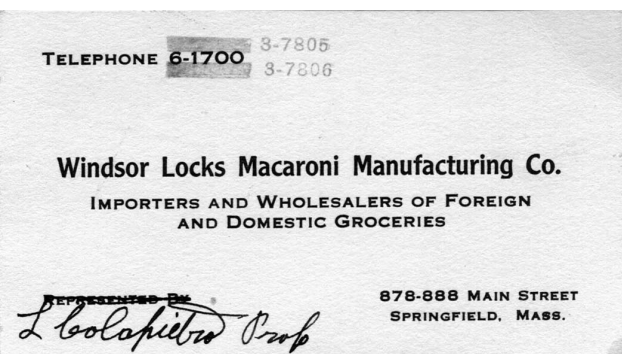
Carlisle Hardware, First National Bank, Spring & Main St

51. Carlisle's Hardware - Carlisle's was a centrally located place to go for hardware items for the home. After going to Home Depot or Lowe's in the modern era, one yearns for an old fashioned hardware store such as Carlisle's. See photo on previous page.

52. Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream store - In 1906, Pasquale (Patsy) Colapietro had an early ice cream shop in Windsor Locks. A 1906 photo (below) shows Patsy, his wife, his child, his dog, and his two brothers, Vito and Leo. Patsy's business was listed in the 1913 Windsor Locks map: "Coly, Patsy. Fruits, Cigars, Tobacco & Groceries, Confectionery, Postal Cards and Toys. Imported Olive Oil a Specialty. Mather Block, Main St."



Pasquale Colapietro's store, about 1906.
Pasquale, Pasqualina, Vito, Grazie, Leo.



53. Windsor Locks Macaroni Mfg. Co. Leo Colapietro was the owner. It was in the Mather Block, along with Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream store. Leo bought high-gluten flour from Wisconsin, Nebraska and New York State to make into pasta of all kinds and shapes. According to a Windsor Locks Journal article, the macaroni manufacturing company burned down, along with the rest of the "Mather Block" in 1924. Leo Colapietro moved to Springfield, Mass., where he opened the Windsor Locks Supermarket on Main St. His macaroni business card is seen above.

54. First National Supermarket - The next photo is of the First National Supermarket, which was next to Carlisle's. It moved to Dexter Plaza in the early 1960s and it later moved to Turnpike Road. The First National chain changed their name to the Finast Supermarkets.



Red Leary's Mobil Station
First National Supermarket



Vito Lefemine cuts Lenny Montemerlo's hair. 1962

55. Lefemine Barber Shop - Above is a 1962 photo below of Vito Lefemine cutting the hair of a very young Lenny Montemerlo, who wasn't sure he liked the haircut.

56. Sisitzky's Market - Mr. Sisitzky owned the building and operated his market until he sold it to Bill Buckley in about 1940. Bill sold it to Jim Price in about 1955. It closed in about 1961. See advertisement below.

Meats and Groceries
-- At --
Low Prices for Standard Goods

GROCERY SPECIALS	MEAT SPECIALS
Palmolive Soap... 2 bars for 9c	Legs of Lamb... 27c lb
Sugar... 10 lbs for 50c	Lamb Stew... 2 lbs 25c
Forest Park Tomatoes... 2 cans for 25c	Swift Premium Roasting Chickens 32c lb
Macaroni or Spaghetti... 10c pkg	Veal Stew... 2 lbs 25c
Land O'Lake Butter 2 lbs for 59c	Swift Premium Fowl... 28c lb
Old Dutch Cleaner... 3 cans for 25c	Swift Premium Bacon... 25c lb
2-lb can of Cocoa... 22c	Groton Weigle Frankfurts... 23c lb
Pineapple Juice... 10c can	Groton Weigle Sausage... 25c lb
Brer Rabbit Molasses... 2 cans for 25c	Fresh Ground Hamburg... 15c lb
Not-A-Seed Raisins... 8c pkg	Corned Beef, Sugar Cured... 10c lb
Heinz Sweet Pickles... qt. jar 28c	Armour Star Boiled Ham 35c lb
Forest Park Red Salmon large can 20c	Pork Chops, Rib End... 16c lb
	Puritan Smoked Shoulders... 15c lb

Sisitzky's Market
"The Store of Quality and Service"
112 MAIN STREET : WINDSOR LOCKS
Delivery Service Telephone 645

Windsor Locks Journal Ad, May 4, 1934



Red Leary's Gas Station. Red is on the right.

57. Red Leary's Gas Station - 92 Main St. A 1915 photo on the previous page shows the First National Supermarket to the right of Red Leary's Mobil gas station, which had pumps right on Main St. Above is a photo of the interior of the gas station.

58. Town Clerk's Office - was where town records were kept before Windsor Locks had a town hall. While this was not a business, Leo Montemerlo had it on his list.

59. Billy "Hoisty" Asselin's Newspaper stand was the 2nd store from the North corner of Church and Main. He retired in 1960. It became Charland's Drug Store.



Ray Charland

Church St & Main St.- 2nd store past corner was Hoisty Asselin's Paper Stand. Later it was Charland's Pharmacy

59A. Charland's Drug Store - Ray and Tilly Charland opened their pharmacy in 1957. Jack Redmond wrote an article on them on July 13, 1978. Ray got out of the business when redevelopment happened, and he went on to work for the state from 1972-78. While operating the pharmacy, they donated a percentage of their earnings to charity annually. Tilly sold Avon products for about 5 years. See the above photos of the pharmacy and of Ray.

Having arrived at the corner of Church and Main Streets, we cross Church St, and arrive at the South corner of the intersection. On our right is the Bridgeview Restaurant.

60. Bridgeview Restaurant - Philip Lombardi was the proprietor of this well-known and long-lived restaurant. See photo below of Phil Lombardi standing in front of his restaurant in 1945. Later photos show that a brick facade was added in 1955. The Bridgeview Restaurant was one of the first places in Windsor Locks to sell grinders.



Phil Lombardi in front of his Bridgeview Restaurant 1948

61. Bill Karges Shoe Store



Bill Karges Shoe Store, Main St., south of Church St.

62. Package Store - owned by Mr. Preli and Mr. Kennedy.

63. Tommaso Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership and Garage, 114 Main St. This was the first Pontiac dealership in the area. It also had a gas station. See photo on next page. Tommaso came up with the idea of putting an awning over the gas pumps to shelter customers from the sun and rain.

Before Mr. Zaccheo started his Pontiac Dealership, he had a "Armchair Restaurant" in that building, which he owned. Armchair restaurants were not uncommon in the early 1900s. In such a restaurant, chairs had one arm that was very wide and was used as a table. After Tom sold his dealership, his family moved to

nearby Massachusetts and he became a “gentleman farmer”. By the way, the A&P once occupied the first floor of Mr. Zaccheo’s building.

Before Mr. Zaccheo bought the building, it was known as “Coffin Hall”. After he sold the building, it became a Norge appliance dealership owned by Mr. Preli and Mr. Lunn.



Tomasso Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership
White building at left. Main St, south of Church St, across from bridge.

64. Vinny Musco's Esso Station - Originally this gas station was owned by Mr. Barberi. See photo on next page. Vinny bought the gas station in 1957. The photo shows a man riding a stationary bicycle next to the gas pump. The photo was taken after the 1938 hurricane when there was no electricity, so they powered the pump by hooking it up to a bicycle. Jack Redmond wrote a “Cabbages and Kings” article on Vinny Musco, and said that the Main St. Esso station was the first in Connecticut to have a “pit” for servicing autos.

When it was evident that Main St was going to be “redeveloped,” Vinny decided it was time to go. He sold his Main St. gas station and moved to Turnpike Rd, where he opened a Texaco station. Vinny’s Main St. Esso station had an old Coca-Cola machine which was sold when he sold the station. It still exists. It is now in the hands of Chet Pohorylo of Windsor Locks (2016). See photo on next page.



Barberi Esso, later became Vinny Musco Esso.
1938 Photo, no electricity after hurricane.
Using bicycle to pump the gas.



Vinny Musco Esso coke machine.
Later bought by Chet Pohorylo

65. Barberi's Home Style Bakery - This was a well loved business which is fondly remembered by its customers. The bread, cakes, cookies and other treats were delicious. To understand where Barberi's bakery was located, see photo below. In the photo, Fusick's gas station is on the left, and Barberi's bakery is on the right.



Barberi's Home Style Bakery
seen from Mike Fusick's gas station

66. Ashmere Inn - Harriet Clark Dexter Harriet and her husband, Edwin Douglass, the onsite engineer for building the Windsor Locks canal, had the Ashmere estate built in the 1830s. The name "Ashmere" came from the beautiful Ash trees on the grounds. Dexter Drake Coffin later offered Ashmere to the town for use as a library in 1952, but was turned down. He sold it to a local businessman who turned it into an Inn. In 1957, it was sold and torn down, to make room for Dexter Plaza. Photo is below. This ends our southerly walk down Main St.

Now we cross the canal, reverse course, and head North, walking along the road between the canal and the mills.



Ashmere Inn

VII. Walk North along the canal, as far as the American Writing Paper Co.

---- GO ACROSS CANAL TO THE STRIP OF LAND WHERE THE MILLS ARE.

Now we take the last leg of Leo Montemerlo's walk through his memories of Windsor Locks businesses. We cross over the canal. We are on the road between the canal and the river, where the manufacturing plants are. During his career, Leo worked at three of those plants (Medlicott, Windsor Locks Paper Corp. and Dexters). The following gives an idea of how much money people made when they worked at those mills in the 1930s and 40s. When he was 15 in 1930, he went to work for the Medlicott Factory in the carding room, where he made 35 cents an hour. In 1938 he worked in the spinning room, where he made \$1.15 an hour. In 1937, he moved to the Windsor Locks Paper Co. where he was a foreman. In 1945, at age 40, he moved to Dexter Corp, where he drove a lift truck and earned \$1.50 an hour.

67. Katz Junk yard - Leo's list included the name "Katz' Junk Yard". Charles Carroll provided a clue as to what that meant. Louis and Rebecca Katz lived on North St., just around the corner from where the Carroll family lived at 18 Suffield St. They were "rag dealers" and collected rags and junk by horse and wagon. They had a junkyard or storage area near the canal. No other information was available on "Katz's Junk Yard".

68. Windsor Locks Paper Co. - This was one of the smaller paper mills in Windsor Locks. Among its customers was the United States Army. They bought vast quantities of toilet paper from the Windsor Locks Paper Co. They regularly did quality control checks on the toilet paper. The cartons of toilet paper were stacked in large blocks. The inspector would tell Leo Montemerlo to get a particular carton in the middle of those blocks of cartons of toilet paper, and they would take a "random" roll out of that box and count the sheets on the roll. The mill building is no longer in existence. See newspaper clipping below.

Three Plants Close Down But Aviation Industries And Other Business Places Look for Upturn Before Year's End

Thompsonville, Jan. 18 -- Despite the current slowdown of some Northern Connecticut industries, many area manufacturers are expanding their facilities, confident of an upturn in production later in the year.

Good Expansion

Although three plants, the E. Horton Co., Windsor Locks, Stafford Worsted Co., and the Pacific Pearl Button Co., ceased operations during the past year and the Windsor Locks Paper Co. has closed down for an indefinite period, expansion has taken place in many instances.

Spfd. Union, Jan 15, 1958

69. C.H. Dexter - Dexters was the largest and most well known business in Windsor Locks for a long while, and it was one of the largest employers in the town. It never had unions, although attempts were made to form one. The employees always voted against the formation of a union. See photo below. It is not well known that the Coffin family was instrumental in the building of Bradley Field, and there was thought given to naming the airport after Dexter Coffin. However, it was felt that the name "Coffin Airport" was a bit too morbid, so it became Bradley Field. Dexters, once the oldest firm on the New York Stock Exchange, became Alstrom in the year 2000.



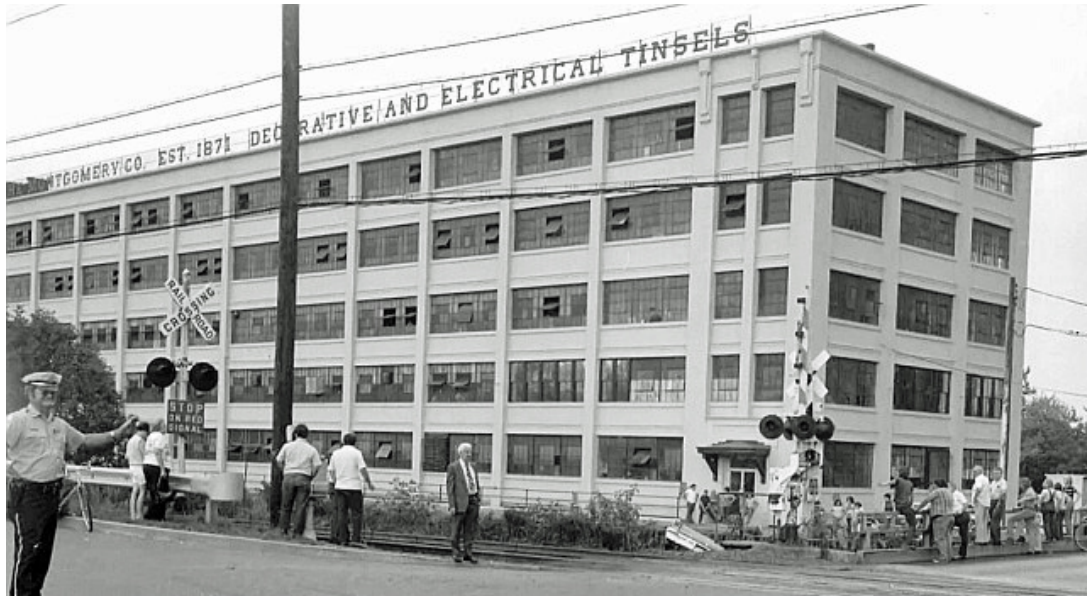
C.H. Dexter & Sons

70. Medicott Co The Medicott Company produced woolen and knit goods. It was an outgrowth from a small business begun by William G. Medicott, of Longmeadow, Mass in 1866. It was known for introducing the highest technology machines for making such products. It no longer exists. It was located on the South side of the bridge. See photo below.



The Medicott Factory, just south of the bridge

71. J. R. Montgomery Co - was located just north of the bridge to Warehouse Point. See photo below. First built in the 1871, the Montgomery Mill was originally made to manufacture “cotton warp” which formed the basis for carpets. Later it switched to decorative and electrical tinsel. It closed down in 1989. There was a fire In 2007.



J.R.Montgomery Building, just north of the bridge 1976

72. Horton Chuck - Eli Horton, of Stafford, a skillful machinist, who had resided here several years, invented a lathe-chuck, which superseded all previous inventions in this line, and the Horton Chuck company was quite successful. See photo below. Leo Montemerlo's father, Silvio Montemerlo, worked at Horton Chuck.



**Eli Horton & Sons mill is to the left.
It was destroyed by fire in 2006**

73. - American Writing Paper Company - see the 1913 map. The American Writing Paper Company owned the Windsor Paper Co., which was on the bank of the canal.

CONCLUSION

Leo Montemerlo made a list of 77 businesses in downtown Windsor Locks. His list turned out to be a map. These businesses existed sometime between when he was born in 1915 and when he wrote the list in 2013. We saw that the businesses in the list were written in order of their location along a certain route through downtown. A small map on page 2 showed that path. We saw how all of these businesses are located on a two-page map of Windsor Locks. We saw 53 old photos, advertisements and newspaper clippings which helped us visualize the 77 businesses in Leo's list.

For historians and for citizens of Windsor Locks, Leo Montemerlo's list/map is an absolute delight. He wrote down names that most Windsor Locks citizens in 2016 have never heard of. They include: the Princess Theater, the Central Hall building, the Beehive Building, Beltrandi's, Garbarino's Ice Cream Store, Wong's Chinese Laundry Umberto Pesci's shoe repair shop, and Katz's Junkyard.

Leo's list provided the information on the location of businesses such as Umberto Pesci's shoe repair shop, and Patsy Colapietro's Ice Cream Shop. His map led to research on Zaccheo's Pontiac Dealership which uncovered the fact that before it was a car dealership, it was an "armchair restaurant," and for a while, the A&P was located on the first floor of Mr. Zaccheo's building. It led to finding out that before the A&P existed across from the Railroad Station, there was a building there in which boxing matches and basketball games were held. That was the Central Hall Building. We also learned that the Central Hall Building previously was the Burnap Block, which included an Opera House! Leo's map raised some questions than have not yet been answered here. We still don't know the where Katz's junkyard was.

Many people helped with the research on Leo Montemerlo's map. My brother, Lenny Montemerlo found Leo's list. Together, we figured out the route that our fits our father's sequence of business locations. Mickey Danyluk's knowledge of Windsor Locks history solved a number of issues that Leo's list of businesses brought up. Noreen Baron identified the location of the Chinese Laundry on Grove St. Jerry Dougherty's website provided a number of photographs. The Windsor Locks Library, in the persons of Gloria Malec and Eileen Pearce, provided needed photographs. The children of Tommaso Zaccheo, John, Anna and Tom, provided information about the Zaccheo dealership, and about the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Co, and of Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream store.

Chapter 26

Ettore R. Carniglia: Windsor Locks' Most Beloved Son



Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia 1904 - 1970

INTRODUCTION

Windsor Lock has had a host of successful sons and daughters. It would be impossible to determine which one was “the most successful.” However, it is not difficult to know which one was “most beloved.” That would be Dr. Carniglia. His friends knew him as “Carney.” He was born Ettore Francis Carniglia on January 8, 1904, to Jennie and John Carniglia. Both Jennie and John were immigrants from northern Italy. His mother worked in the Medlicott factory, and his father worked for the Allen Pease Co.

While Dr. Carniglia is the most well-known figure in Windsor Locks history, his life story is not well-known. In 2014, Windsor Locks historian, Philip Devlin wrote an excellent biography of Dr. Carniglia, which is doing a lot to correct that. He thoroughly researched all possible sources from Windsor Locks, from the medical community and even from Italy. His work does justice to Dr. Carniglia. Mr. Devlin’s book can be found in the Windsor Locks Public Library, and in the Senior Center, which has been named after Dr. Carniglia.

SCHOOLING

Past research on highly successful citizens of Windsor Locks revealed that they excelled in their schooling. Such was the case with the young Ettore Carniglia. He was a precocious student at St. Mary’s Elementary School, where he even skipped a grade.

He contracted rheumatic fever as a child. While he recovered from it, his heart valves were left scarred, which affected him in later life.

After graduating from St. Mary's in 1917, he entered the Loomis Institute in Windsor. His parents never had a car, so he had to find other ways to get to and from school. If he couldn't get a ride any other way, the trolley from Windsor Locks to Windsor cost a nickel. There were other boys from Windsor Locks at Loomis at that time. Elmer "Red" Leary was an outstanding athlete who graduated at the end of Ettore's first year. Red was in the first class to graduate from Loomis. Alfred B. Taravella, who attended Loomis for three years along with Ettore, went on to become a banker in Windsor Locks.

Ettore went by the nicknames of "Carney," "Carnegie" and "Spaghetti". There was an election for the brightest member of his class. He got all the votes. A yearbook contains a quotation by British poet Oliver Goldsmith, which was directed at Ettore: "And still they gazed and still the wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew." He was voted as: Most Likely to Succeed, Most Energetic, and Biggest Grind. He was second in two categories: Most Conscientious and Most Literary.

Ettore won a college scholarship from the Loomis Institute. The award said that his college entrance scores were not only the highest achieved at Loomis, but were among the highest in the country.

In 1921, he went to Harvard with that small scholarship from Loomis. He acquired three more scholarships, which enabled him to get through his undergraduate years without having to find a job. He wore clothes that his mother made. He wasn't a typical Harvard undergraduate. As we shall see later in his life, clothes and fashion never mattered to him.

Ettore majored in medicine. His graduation class had 572 students. Fifteen students graduated *Summa Cum Laude*. Ettore and J. Robert Oppenheimer, who later invented the atomic bomb, were among those fifteen students. Despite being highly honored at graduation, he did not attend the ceremony. His father came to Boston for the event, but Ettore realized that the length and the intellectual nature of the ceremony would make his father uncomfortable, so he took his dad to a Boston Red Sox game.

After graduating from Harvard in 1925, he went to Harvard Medical School. He took extra courses, and had enough credits to graduate in three years. However, he stayed and took more courses in his fourth year. He graduated at the top of his class.

A very telling episode occurred while Dr. Carniglia was being evaluated for an internship at Hartford Hospital. When he interviewed for a possible internship there, two things were brought up about his background. He was Italian and Catholic. Although he wanted that internship, he told the committee in no uncertain terms that his religion and ethnicity should not be considered in evaluating his qualifications for an internship there. He said that no good doctor would consider these factors in evaluating a patient's problems. He angrily stormed out of the room.

Interestingly enough, the review committee asked him to return, and they offered him the position. He was the first Italian-American who was admitted to their program. At the time, Hartford Hospital was the Protestant hospital, and St. Francis Hospital was the Catholic hospital. Things have since changed at Hartford Hospital.

CAREER

After his internship, Dr. Carniglia went to Baltimore's Union Memorial Hospital to serve as a staff doctor. He was there for five months. He left because he felt that Baltimore had many doctors, while his hometown, Windsor Locks, was badly in need of a doctor. He returned to Windsor Locks, and set up a practice at 4 Oak Street. He had to get a car and a driver's license. He had never had either. He met Blanche Goodsell at Hartford Hospital, where she was the supervisor of the obstetrical ward. They were married on March 6, 1933, in a secret ceremony at the Wethersfield State Prison by the chaplain of the prison. The marriage had to be kept secret to protect Blanche's status as a nurse.

Windsor Locks' large Italian population immediately began to seek out Dr. Carniglia. He also opened an office in Hartford, which was open two evenings a week. His mother used to answer the office phone in Windsor Locks since she spoke both Italian and English. House calls began immediately. Then there were babies. The first baby that Dr. Carniglia delivered was John Basile, the son of Tony Basile, the shoemaker. Dr. Carniglia also became the doctor for the County Home in Warehouse Point, and the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford. He was appointed the Town Health Officer in 1933.

In 1933, he bought a large house from Fred Bidwell at 5 North Main Street that could serve as both his house and his office. In 1937, he and Blanche adopted a son and a daughter. They were biological brother and sister. Their names were Peter Michael and Margaret Elizabeth.

World War II came along. It brought with it a great increase in activity at Bradley Field, which was a military airfield. Dr. Carniglia was called to go there whenever an airplane crash occurred. The airfield was named for Lt. Eugene Bradley, who crashed his P-40 on August 21, 1941. Dr. Carniglia signed his death certificate. His was one of 220 aircraft accidents at Bradley Field from 1941 to 1945.

On July 6, 1944, the worst circus accident in American history occurred in Hartford. It was a fire in which at least 167 people died. There were over 35 people there from Windsor Locks. Blanche Carniglia had taken Peter, who was eight years old, and Margaret, who was seven years old, to the circus that day. A fire broke out just as the Flying Wallendas were about to perform, and it spread very fast. Panic broke out. Blanche and Margaret were able to escape, but in the confusion, they became separated from Peter. Dr. Carniglia rushed to Hartford and searched through the bodies to try and find Peter. They found him the next morning at the Hartford Police station. He was unharmed and sipping on a soda.

Dr. Carniglia maintained a presence at Hartford Hospital. He was famous for his ability as a diagnostician. A diagnostician has to have an immense amount of information in his head, along with the ability to spot things that others might ignore. Here is one example of his diagnostic capability which took place at Hartford Hospital. A young boy was feverish and lethargic, and he had a rash. Dr. Carniglia looked at the boy's hands, and then he pulled down the lower lid of one of his eyes. There were tiny hemorrhages in his fingernail beds and in his lower eyelid. Based on that, Dr. Carniglia correctly diagnosed the boy as having meningitis. The other doctors didn't think to look in those two places.

In 1948, Jimmy Franklin, the manager of the A&P, found out that Dr. Carniglia's car was having troubles. He did a fund-raising campaign and raised enough money to buy the doctor a new Cadillac for his 44th birthday.

When Dr. Carniglia was born in Windsor Locks in 1904, the population was about 3000. By 1960, it was almost 11,500. The growth in population was accompanied by the need for more medical care. In 1950, Dr. Carniglia brought in Dr. John Kennedy to join his practice. He actually lived with the Carniglias until he got married in 1953. During the 1950s, the two doctors made as many as 18 house calls a day, in addition to their office hours. Dr. Kennedy continued his practice in Windsor Locks until his death in 1995 at age 74.

If you visited Dr. Carniglia's office in the early 1960s, you would see a stack of several cases of Coca Cola. The waiting room would be filled with patients sitting on black wooden "Harvard" chairs. Oftentimes, the waiting room overflowed and the patients would sit on the steps outside. You would hear him yell: "Who's next?" When you walked into his office, you would smell the rubbing alcohol that he used to sterilize his instruments, and you would see a man in rumpled, loose-fitting clothes, with suspenders holding his pants up. There would be a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He had a raspy voice, and was difficult to understand. When you walked in and said your name, he'd often have a nice comment about you or your family.

Dr. Carniglia worked 20 hour days, day after day, with no vacations. He held office hours and made house calls every day. He didn't exercise much, and he constantly had a cigarette in his mouth and a Coca Cola by his hand. It was a different world. Back then, most doctors smoked. He was not an exception. Dr. Carniglia was wearing himself out.

He continued to make house calls into the mid 1960s. In the early 1960s, he was hospitalized for sub-acute bacterial endocarditis, which was caused by having had rheumatic fever as a child. He recovered, and went back to work.

On June 22, 1966, he suffered a stroke. It resulted in slurred speech and paralysis on one side. After a few months, he returned to practicing medicine. After that, he worked about six hours a day, until he died.

On Saturday, October 23, 1971, at the age of 67, Dr. Carniglia suffered a massive stroke, and died.

Dr. Carniglia was a selfless man. For most of his career, he charged \$3 for an office visit, and \$50 for delivering a baby. He instructed his bookkeeper to send a bill out only once. If payment was not forthcoming, she was not to send out a second notice. He sometimes gave money to patients who couldn't afford a needed medicine.

After he passed away, his wife asked a friend to clean up his office and his desk. One of the desk drawers was jammed. The jam was caused by a large over-stuffed envelope. In the envelope were checks for deliveries of Windsor Locks babies. It turns out that he didn't cash the checks of those that he didn't think could afford to pay.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia was an extraordinary man. He had no use for the normal pleasures that most people treasure, such as nice clothes, a 40 hour work week, an annual vacation, and retirement.

His goal was to provide needed medical services in his hometown, regardless of whether people could afford them or not. There are few, if any, people who would have been willing to work the number of hours that he did. He didn't make excuses. There were times he was called to deliver a baby in a snowstorm, when his car couldn't get through, so he just trudged through the snow, on foot.

He was a "giver," not a "taker." He had a level of intelligence that few people have. He worked incredibly hard at his education and his job.

He broke all of the rules for getting ahead in this world. He did it his way.

What did it buy him? It bought him the undying love and respect of the people of Windsor Locks. No one who knew him will ever forget him.

SOURCE

"Carney: the Remarkable Life of Ettore F. Carniglia, MD" by Philip R. Devlin, 2014, ISBN #: 978-0-615-86325-2. Self-published. Available at the Windsor Locks Public Library.

Chapter 27

Ella Grasso: Windsor Locks Woman Becomes Governor



Ella Grasso

INTRODUCTION

Ella Grasso remains Windsor Locks' best-known woman. Dr. Ettore Carniglia remains the town's best-known man. Fame is often accompanied by a bit of pompousness or aloofness. Neither Ella nor Ettore were the least bit pompous, pretentious or aloof. They were "down to Earth." Ella never rode in a limousine while she was governor. "Carney" made house calls in his family car, with his wife, Blanche, as driver. Both had excellent records in their schooling. Windsor Locks has many good role models for its young men. Ella Grasso is wonderful role model for the young women of Windsor Locks. She did extremely well in what was then a man's world. She had to break new ground to do what she did. We can all learn a great deal from the accomplishments of Ella Grasso.

EDUCATION

Ella was born on May 10, 1919, in Windsor Locks to Italian immigrant parents, James and Maria Oliva Tambussi. Her father owned and operated the Windsor Locks Bakery, and her mother was a mill worker.

Ella attended St. Mary's School in Windsor Locks, and then went to the Chaffee Institute in Windsor. After high school graduation in 1936, she entered Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in economics and sociology with minors in history and

political science. Her academic accomplishments were many, and she earned a Phi Beta Kappa key her junior year. Yet schoolwork was not enough to keep Ella busy. During her junior and senior years at Mount Holyoke, she held positions as a part-time assistant and teacher for the Department of Economics and Sociology. In 1942, Ella received a Masters of Arts degree in economics and sociology from Mount Holyoke. (http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

After graduating in 1942, Ella Tambussi married Thomas Grasso, a schoolteacher and principal. The couple raised two children, Susanne and James.

CAREER

In 1943, Ella's longtime life of public service began with a position at the Connecticut State Department of Labor. A year later, she became the Assistant Connecticut State Director of Research for the War Manpower Commission, where she served until 1946. In 1952, she was elected to the Connecticut House of Representatives, where she served until 1957. She became first woman to be elected "Floor Leader of the House" in 1955. In 1958 she was elected Secretary of the state of Connecticut, and she was re-elected in 1962 and 1966. She was the first woman to chair the Democratic State Platform Committee and served on that committee from 1956 to 1968. She served as a member of the Platform Drafting Committee for the 1960 Democratic National Convention. She was the co-chairman of the Resolutions Committee for the Democratic National Conventions of 1964 and 1968. In 1970 she was elected as a Democratic representative to the 92nd Congress of the United States. She won re-election in 1972.

(<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/sites/default/files/Alphabetical%20Index.pdf>)

In 1974, Ella chose not to run for reelection to Congress. Instead, she opted to run for the position of Governor of Connecticut. In January 1974, she announced her gubernatorial candidacy, which ensured that by the following January she would retire from the House. Ella won the gubernatorial race against GOP House colleague, Representative Robert Steele. She became the first woman to be elected a US governor without succeeding a husband. Grasso's four-year term commenced in January 1975. The fiscal problems of Connecticut forced her to follow a far more conservative policy as governor than she had as a Member of Congress. Despite budget cuts, Ella maintained her popularity and won re-election in 1978 against another House GOP veteran, Ronald Sarasin. (<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/14052>)

Ella Grasso was described as a symbolic rather than a doctrinaire feminist leader. She opposed legalized abortion, but did not actively support affirmative action. She supported the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, but did not campaign for it. She was a popular politician, who in 28 years as a public figure, never lost an election. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ella-Grasso>)

Sadly, on December 31, 1980, Governor Grasso resigned her office due to illness. She passed away several weeks later on February 5, 1981, at the age of 61, from ovarian cancer. Her accomplishments however, remained intact. She is remembered for bringing the state of Connecticut out of debt, and for creating an open government, which gave ordinary citizens easier access to public records.

President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and said: "Long before the women's movement had gained prominence, Ella Grasso had already begun the long, hard ascent to distinction as an elected public servant. A fond wife and mother, she proved that it is possible to reconcile a full family life with a long and eventful political career...[she] won the respect of fellow citizens of both parties. Tireless in the pursuit of duty and courageous in the face of illness, Ella Grasso has earned the admiration of all Americans as a legislator, a governor and a woman of outstanding character and achievement."

(http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

Ella developed the reputation of being a real leader. A good example of this was the blizzard of 1978, which dumped several feet of snow on Connecticut. She made a controversial decision to close the state down. She shut down the roads by proclamation in order to minimize accidents and make way for emergency vehicles. As a result, storm-related fatalities in Connecticut were much lower than in surrounding states and, ultimately, Grasso's decision was recognized as a wise one, and it set the basis for future emergency response situations.

(<http://www.nhregister.com/article/NH/20120324/NEWS/303249929>)

Ella Grasso understood that gender should not be an obstacle in her political career. In a speech given at Mount Holyoke College, she said that the time spent at her alma mater taught her that gender is not a "pressing issue in life." She opted not to take the radical feminist stance so common during the 1970s. She chose to win the female vote with her policies on education and health. Upon winning the Connecticut governorship in 1974, Newsweek magazine, inspired by her victory and political acumen, ran a series of articles on women politicians. (http://www.italiansrus.com/biography/ella_tambussi_grasso.htm)

CONCLUSIONS

Ella Grasso was special in many ways. One could see, back when she was in school, that she was bright and that she worked hard. One could see, when she got into the very difficult area of politics, that she was not only bright and hardworking, but that she also had the ability to look at difficult situations, and figure ways to turn them into a "win". Politics is not a field that makes things easy for those who enter it. There are always opponents. There are always people waiting for you to slip up, and there is always continued competition in elections. Ella never lost an election. She "thought outside the box" when necessary.

Ella handled the feminist movement of her time in an unconventional way. She just didn't think that gender was a pressing issue. She became a member of the US House of Representatives. However she realized that she would have less ability to make things happen there than she would have in Connecticut state government. As a result, she got back into state politics. She was an effective, yet unconventional politician, she never became pompous. She was not into high-fashion. She remained "Ella" throughout her life. She opened up new paths for young women, and was a role model who showed that one didn't always have to take the path that was well worn. She would rank high on anyone's list of Windsor Locks' most successful individuals.

It is interesting that three of the most successful citizens of Windsor Locks (Ella Grasso, Dr. Ettore Carneglia and Wilson Taylor), were all from the Clay Hill section of Windsor Locks!!! Ella often referred to Dr. Carneglia as "My hero". According to Jon Purmont's biography of Ella, she broke discrimination barriers, and she demonstrated that first generation immigrants could be successful in the land of opportunity.

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Chapter 28

Hugh Montgomery: Extraordinary Windsor Locks Citizen



Hugh Montgomery, about 1945

Hugh Montgomery, who was born on Nov. 29, 1923, is one of the most extraordinary persons ever to come out of Windsor Locks. He was a member of the Montgomery family which owned the J. R. Montgomery Company. Hugh's father was John Robert Montgomery (1890-1967), who was the son of George M. Montgomery (1857-1947). George M. Montgomery was the brother of J. R. Montgomery, who originally founded the company in 1871 with two partners. J. R. Montgomery bought out his two former partners in 1865, and George M. Montgomery became a partner and an active manager in the firm at that time.

It should be pointed out that the J. R. Montgomery firm was not an ordinary company which produced ordinary things. Its owners were creative, risk-taking innovators who vastly increased the kinds and numbers of specialty yarns, and made advances in the use of metals both in combination with yarns and for use as electrical components. The Montgomery family, which founded and grew this company, consisted of highly motivated, highly intelligent, creative individuals.

Given that background, it would not be surprising to find that Hugh Montgomery turned out to be an exceptional person. According to the June 17, 1937 issue of the

Springfield Republican, Hugh was one of 48 students who were graduating from Windsor Locks public grammar school. Hugh went to high school at the Loomis academy in Windsor, Connecticut. He took the train back and forth from Windsor Locks to Windsor during high school. During the hurricane of 1938, he was walking home from the Loomis School along the railroad tracks, and the water was growing deeper. He was able to make it home.

After graduating from Loomis, he went to Harvard University for one semester. The July 10, 1943 Springfield Republican states that Hugh Montgomery, a member of the army reserve corps, was called to active duty, and was receiving initial training at Fort Bragg, NC. He became a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. On D-Day, he parachuted into Normandy.

Montgomery was wounded while serving as a paratrooper in World War II, and joined the Office of Strategic Services's counter-intelligence branch, known as X-2. His fluency in a number of languages, including German, would serve him well in the special counter-intelligence detachment of the Office of Special Services (OSS), the wartime spy organization. He was often called upon to go behind German lines to find and bring out Germans who could provide valuable information.

In April 1945, he was on a mission with five other OSS operatives to find a nuclear physicist in eastern Germany, when they happened upon a place which had a terrible smell. They had arrived at the Buchenwald concentration camp. When they arrived, the survivors had just taken over. Montgomery's team saw a group of German guards who were trying to surrender. One of the inmates asked Montgomery to leave the guards to them. Montgomery replied: "They're yours." Montgomery broke OSS secrecy protocol, and radioed to an Army contact about what was happening. Later he said that the experience at Buchenwald had given him nightmares.

During his OSS operations in WWII, he met the woman he eventually married. He was on a covert mission in Austria, when the German Army moved into that area. A young woman hid him in a barrel. A German officer checked the barrel by tapping it with his swagger stick, but did not open the barrel. Hugh later married Annamarie Janek, the Viennese girl who hid him in the barrel. This story was told in the December 16, 1962 issue of the Boston Record American newspaper.

After the war, Hugh Montgomery returned to finish his education at Harvard. He earned a BA in 1947, an MA in 1948, and a PhD in 1952. According to the Springfield Union of July 25, 1951, Hugh won a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship from Princeton University for a year's study in South America. His wife joined him in that year abroad.

After returning to Harvard to earn his Ph.D., he joined the newly formed CIA, where he led spying operations against the Soviets in Rome, Paris, Vienna, Athens and Moscow. He went to Berlin where he worked on a secret tunnel designed to tap Soviet communications. He learned to speak the language of each of those countries. He spoke eight languages fluently.

In the early 1960s, he was the Deputy Station Chief in Moscow. One day, he was to retrieve a message left by the agency's top Soviet informant in a high toilet tank during a dinner party at the American ambassador's residence in Moscow. He climbed up on a sink, and got one arm wet retrieving the piece of paper. Montgomery and his wife, Annemarie, left the party, arm in arm, with the piece of paper, and no-one was the

wiser. The Soviet informant was Col. Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky, who provided information that helped President Kennedy diffuse the Cuba Missile Crisis.

In 1962, the Russian government accused Hugh Montgomery and six others with espionage with regard to Col. Penkovsky. All got out of the country before the situation got worse.

Montgomery temporarily left the CIA in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan nominated him as Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the United States Department of State. He held that office from October 19, 1981 until January 6, 1985. From 1985-1989 he served as a deputy US ambassador to the United Nations. He returned to the CIA after this assignment and served with the Agency until he retired in 2014. In 2014, CIA director John Brennan, awarded him the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, and called him "one of the greatest American heroes of our time." See the photo of Hugh and his wife, Annemarie with President Bush in the mid-1980s.



Hugh & Annemarie Montgomery with President Bush

Hugh Montgomery's service to the CIA spanned the years from 1953 to 2014. That is an incredible 62 years. He retired at the age of 91. Leon Panetta said: "I'd call him one of the founding fathers of the CIA". Panetta consulted Montgomery occasionally when he was director of the spy agency. Hugh Montgomery's life and career were nothing short of astounding. Below is a photo of him at about the time of his retirement in 2014. He died on April 6, 2017, shortly after this chapter was written. In my last conversation with him, he told me that he read this chapter, and that he enjoyed it. He also verified its accuracy.



Hugh Montgomery, about 2014

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Chapter 29

Interview with Hugh Montgomery at age 93



Hugh Montgomery, about 2014

The previous chapter, entitled “Hugh Montgomery: Extraordinary Windsor Locks Citizen” provides an overview of Dr. Hugh Montgomery’s life, including:

- his boyhood in Windsor Locks
- his high school years at the Loomis Institute in Windsor,
- his freshman year at Harvard,
- his service in the US Army in World War II, where he served as a spy,
- his return to Harvard to get a B.A, an MA and a Ph.D., and,
- his career with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The previous chapter provides good background information for this chapter, which is an interview with Hugh Montgomery. It took place in his home on February 20, 2017, at a time when he was 93 years old. Hugh lived in McLean, Virginia, not far from the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency, where he worked from 1953 until 2014, when he retired at the age of 91. That last sentence alone tells you that he is an extraordinary man. Sadly, he died on April 6, 2017, just two months after the interview.

Although I had been in telephone contact with Hugh a number of times, the interview was the first time I met him in person. Hugh sat down in his favorite chair. I gave him a copy of Phil Devlin’s book about Dr. Carniglia, and told him that it was a gift from the author. It was obvious from the expression on his face that Hugh was

delighted to get the book. With Hugh's permission, I turned on my electronic voice recorder, and the interview began.

Hugh: Carney was a totally unselfish man. He would come to our house any hour of the day or night. Blanche would drive him. He would be there with a cigarette hanging out of the corner of his mouth. He was unforgettable. Please tell Phil Devlin that I thank him for this book.

Mel: When did you first know Carney?

Hugh: I first met him when I was in my teens. He was our family physician. I went to grammar school in Windsor Locks, but then I went to Loomis, as Carney did. He went to Harvard, as did I. And he went to Harvard Medical School. But I left Loomis as a freshman to join the Army in 1942. I stayed in the Army for a while. They wouldn't let me go. They sent me to Berlin. I kept wanting to go back to Harvard and get an education. Finally I had enough points for accumulated service so that they couldn't lose my files anymore. (laughing), so finally I went back to Harvard. I started as a sophomore in about 1947. I had been in the Army for about five years. And I just stayed at Harvard until I finished my doctorate. Of course, I didn't know anybody when I went back to Harvard. My class was all gone. But it was great because classes were about 85% veterans. They were all on the GI Bill. I never would have made it through Harvard without the GI Bill. In fact, I had the Public Law 16, which was for the disabled veterans. It was marvelous. It paid for everything, all the way through graduate school. You had to go back to have the doctors look at you every once in a while. They had to make sure that you weren't malingering or anything like that (laughing). Then they would certify you, and you could keep on going. But that's the only reason that I was able to get all the way through my doctorate. They asked me to stay on and teach, which I did. I enjoyed it for a while, but I discovered fairly soon, that the number of veterans dropped way off after the big flood of veterans at the end of the war. I didn't get along with some of the students. I remember that one of the students drove up in his convertible Cadillac, He said, "My old man gave ten million dollars to Harvard. I'm here because he wants me to get a degree. He said, "Don't expect me to do any extra work." I said, "Go to somebody else's class. I don't want you in mine. I got in trouble with the Dean for that. (laughing) He said, "His old man is loaded. We don't want to offend him." I said: "Just put him in another class. I don't want him in mine."

Mel: What about languages? You are a language specialist. When did you start learning languages?

Hugh: My mother taught languages at Smith College.

Mel: so did you study languages in school too?

Hugh: I started at Loomis, absolutely. In my first year, I took Latin, Greek, French and German. I think there were two or three of us in the Greek class. That was great. I loved it. The teacher was a very fine young teacher. He was killed in the war, so he didn't come back.

Mel: What did you major in when you went to college and graduate school at Harvard?

Hugh: Romance & Slavic languages, and I taught French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. I also studied Russian and Polish. I even got a guy to teach us Romanian. There were two of us in his class. It was great. He loved it. We loved it. In all that time, of course, I was in touch with the people in Washington with whom I had been in

the military. They kept saying: "Why don't you stop goofing off and living the life of Riley. Come on down and get an honest job." (laughing) They kept after me. A combination of that and the fact that the number of veterans in the classes had gone way down caused me to lose motivation. The real GI people worked really well. They really got good education. But then Harvard reverted somewhat. You know, it had the reputation of being a rich boy's school. It was enormously expensive.

Mel: So how long did you teach before you went to Washington?

Hugh: Well, I taught as I studied. They didn't pay you much, but it kept the wolf away from the door. And it provided a little income too. Then my friends in Washington kept saying: "Stop goofing off and come down and get a real job."

Mel: Did you go to Washington as soon as you got your doctorate?

Hugh: No, it was shortly thereafter. I stayed for a year afterwards, I think. It just wasn't the same anymore.

Mel: So you taught at Harvard for a year before you went to Washington?

Hugh: Actually, I think it was two years. Then there wasn't the motivation. The students were a different group entirely. The veterans were almost nonexistent by then. There was a great wave of them in 1945 and 1946, Very quickly, it leveled out.

Mel: What happened when you went to Washington?

Hugh: It was about time that I got a decent job.

Mel: Did you join the OSS at that time?

Hugh: The OSS was dissolved in 1945. By then it was CIA. It became CIA in 1948. I got there in 1951. The OSS completely dissolved after FDR died. OSS was the creature of two people - FDR and Gen. Bill Donovan. The only reason it existed was because the two of them were as unlike as any two people you can imagine. But the two of them just hit it off somehow. FDR used to refer to Donovan as "my good legs". He sent Donovan all over the world to see what was really going on since FDR couldn't do it himself. Everybody knew that FDR and Donovan were very close. It meant that Donovan could do just about anything he wanted. For example, the insignia that he picked for the OSS was a golden spear. The OSS was the point of the spear. He asked the Chief of Staff of the Army if that was OK, since there was no such thing as a Secretary of Defense at that time. The Chief of Staff of the Army said: "No, you can't do that." So Donovan went to Roosevelt, and Roosevelt said: "Go ahead, if that is what you want to do." So he appeared the next day with one of these things. The Chief of Staff of the Army said: "How come?", and Donovan replied, "Here is the authorization from the President". That took care of that. When Roosevelt died in 1945, Donovan sent a cable to all of his OSS people abroad. He said: "Batten down the hatches because this is the end of OSS." Truman had a very negative view of us, and it is just a question of time before they cut our funds. Roosevelt died in May. At any rate, it didn't take Truman very long before he just wrote an executive order abolishing it, and it just vanished. It broke Donovan's heart. He never recovered from it.

Mel: How do you prepare for an espionage job?

Hugh: I had no idea what I was getting into. They didn't tell you. So I got orders once to go to Washington and report to "2430 east". I said: "What's that?" They said: "Never mind. You'll find out." It was very, very secretive. You couldn't say what you were doing. You wore a uniform. If someone asked: "What are you doing?", you said:

"I'm in the Army." If they asked: "Well, where do you work?", you responded, "Well, up the street a ways". "What do you do?" You really didn't answer. And then they sent you for training out in the woods, out at the Washington Golf and Country Club. That's where we did a lot of the training. We went out, but we didn't know where we were, because they put us in a truck and pulled down the curtains, and away we went. None of us knew anything about Washington anyway. So you did your training there, and off you went. Next thing, you got on a boat, and you are in England, and go here, go there. Don't ask a lot of stupid questions. (laughing) That's the way things went.

Mel: What do you think made some people good at that job?

Hugh: I think being young and stupid was very helpful. It was all so new and different. They taught all of the kinds of things such as irregular warfare. It was all very intriguing and exciting and you got extra money for it. If you parachuted, you got an extra \$8 a month more. That was a lot. It paid for your laundry. You had to pay for your own laundry. (laughing) It was a bunch of young energetic people. It was a real challenge.

Mel: When in this timeline did you get married?

Hugh: It was long, long after this. I met my wife in a very remote hunting lodge in the mountains of Austria, where the Germans were running a clandestine radio station into the Balkans. I was told: "You go there with two other Americans, and you take over that station." You want to know what's going on. We got some Germans out of a prisoner of war camp. My job was to translate from English to German, and German to English. Then we had a Navy signal man who sat and watched the German man to make sure that he sent exactly what he was supposed to send. He controlled that very carefully. That lasted for about two and a half months, and then we got a message one day, saying that the President thinks that it isn't nice to spy on our Russian neighbors or Russian allies, so get out the hammers and destroy the entire installation. We turned the Germans back over to the prisoner of War camp. We were told to destroy everything, and to burn all equipment. It was actually an orphanage. The transmitting equipment was concealed in the second floor of an orphanage. It was great cover. So that was the end of that.

Mel: Is that when your wife-to-be hid you in a barrel while the Germans were searching the area?

Hugh: We lived somewhat dangerously. The war was still going on. She and I had to keep a pretty low profile. It was way up there in the mountains. They told us it was a Hungarian cavalry regiment, which was part of the German army. And they had apparently gone up, when things got bad. They would come up once in a while and we would get out of the way. We hoped that no one would ask too many questions. It didn't last too long, anyway.

Mel: About what year was that?

Hugh: It was April, May, June and July of 1945, roughly. And then of course, the war ended, and all kinds of things happened.

Mel: Did you go back to Washington after the war ended?

Hugh: No. Let's see. Where did I go from there? I went to the city of Kassel in Northern Germany. I thought that would be the end. Then we went to Berlin. We ended up in Berlin, with the Russians. That was a lot of fun. (laughing) Talk about wild men. Human life meant nothing to them. They shot people for little or no reason. A Russian jeep had a collision with an American jeep. The Russian officer pulled out his pistol and shot his driver. He shouted at the American officer that he should shoot his driver too. This was intolerable. The Russian officer dumped the body of his driver in the street and drove off. He just left him there. The big scandal, the big disaster was that Berlin was divided into American, Russian, British and French sectors. There was a brewery in the British sector. One night, in the Kommendatura, which was the governing body of Berlin after the war, there was a call from the military police saying that a bunch of drunken Russian soldiers had gotten into the brewery, and they had just gone wild, and they have weapons. We had a group of British Military Police, but the minute they checked into it, there was a blast from a machine gun. We had lost control completely. So the Russian representative in the Kommendatura said: "Not to worry. Not to worry." Next thing we knew, he called the Russian military police, and they went to this brewery and they tried to reason with their countrymen. They said: "OK boys, the fun is over". But it didn't do any good. They were all drunk. They did the same thing. The drunk Russian soldiers started shooting. So the Russian MP said: "OK, if that's the way you want it to be, OK, fine." So they stationed the Russian Military Police at the half-windows (the brewery was half underground) and the commander of the Russian MPS said: "When I give the signal, just throw grenades through the windows". So that's what they did. This group of MP just waited on his signal, and they lobbed grenades through all of the glass windows. So what did the Russians do then? They rounded up all the Germans they could find, and made them go in and get the bodies, and take them out and bury them. Those were wild and wooly times. And nobody said anything. Things were pretty scary sometimes. We never went out at night. We kept a very low profile. We always travelled in twos and threes. We stayed away from the Russian sector as much as we could. They were unpredictable. And they were drunk much of the time. The Russians were told by their commanders to do whatever they wanted to. Take your revenge. And they did. It was the Wild West. They were all heavily armed. They would shoot anybody at the drop of a hat.

Mel: This was before you got married, right?

Hugh: Oh yes, long before I got married. I went from Berlin back to the States. We stayed in touch through correspondence. Then she came over here. I was at graduate school at Harvard when we got married. She was multi-lingual, so she had a wonderful time. She became a cashier at a bank while I was getting my doctorate. She loved it. It was fascinating. I was getting pressure from my friends in Washington to "come down to DC and get a real job." So we did. Then we went to Berlin very quickly, and spent the next nine years in Berlin. Then we went all over, everywhere -- France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Moscow... I am missing a few.... Paris, Rome, ten years in Rome -- oh boy. Rome was heaven. I loved that. The first time I went to Italy, it was for five years, from 1965 to 1970, and then from 1975 to 1980. Roman traffic is really something. It defies description. They don't have brakes. They

have horns. (laughing) The only accidents that I ever had in Rome is when I was stopped at a stoplight. Bang. I was rear ended twice.

Mel: Did you get a chance to do any traveling over there?

Hugh: I went all over Italy, Sicily, the islands. When we went to Sicily, they had a huge earthquake. The hotel was shaking like a leaf. I went with a bunch of Italian Naval officers. I asked "Did you arrange this especially for me?" He said No, no, no, no.

Mel: Did you ever get to Amalfi?

Hugh: We went to the Amalfi Coast and Capri, and the Blue Grotto, and all of the other islands there. We used to go there regularly. My children loved it. They loved Italy.

At this point, Hugh picked up the book on Dr. Carneglia, and said: "Let me tell you a story about Carney." I saw Carney frequently when I was a boy, mostly because of my mother, who had a number of illnesses. He would come any hour of the day or night. He come to see her quite often. We saw a great deal of him. Blanche was a great friend of my mother. She drove Carney everywhere. She drove any hour of the day or night. My favorite story of Blanche was that she loved to eat, as you probably know. Her favorite food was corn that had just been picked. At one point, we frequently spent a good deal of time as the Spencer homestead, out it Suffield, on top of the hill. It was a huge farm, with lots of tobacco, naturally, and plenty of corn too. Blanche heard about the fact that we had corn there. She said: "I want to be invited out when you have fresh corn. But don't you dare tell Carney how many ears of corn I ate." She would eat something like 12 ears of corn at one sitting.

At this point, I turned off the voice recorder, and thanked Hugh for a great interview. It had lasted about an hour. It was thoroughly enjoyable. I was in awe of this man, Hugh Montgomery, who has had a life that can only be described as incredible. He was relaxed, upbeat, friendly, and showed a great sense of humor. I had just had an hour with a man from Windsor Locks who got three degrees from Harvard, had an exciting time in the Army during World War II as a spy with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), and followed that up with a career in the CIA which lasted from 1945 to 2014, when he retired at the age of 90! It would be an understatement to say that he led a full life. It was obvious during the interview was that he enjoyed his career thoroughly, and he is now enjoying retirement.

Chapter 30

Wilson H. Taylor: A Boy from Windsor Locks Becomes a Titan of Industry



Wilson H. Taylor

Wilson Henry Taylor is a true Windsor Locksian. He was born on November 17, 1943 to Dr. and Mrs. Wilson H. Taylor of North Main Street. Dr. Taylor was a chiropodist (a foot doctor). Wilson's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. James Hendsey also lived in town. He is a product of Windsor Locks schools. He went to St. Mary's Elementary School in 1949 and graduated in 1956. He got through eight grades in seven years by skipping the third grade. I was a classmate of his at St. Mary's. I remember him as the smartest kid in the class - every year. He was a nice, quiet, unassuming kid who just seemed to learn everything quickly and easily.

Bill, or Billy, as he was known back then, went on to Windsor Locks High School, where he had a career that any parents would be proud of. He made the honor roll every marking period. As a Junior at WLHS, he was a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship competition. (Springfield Union, Oct 9, 1959) When he took his college boards, he got a 1550. That's not bad, considering 1600 is perfect. In his senior year, he won a scholarship from the National Honor Society. He won it over 55,000 other members of the National Honor Society. (Springfield Union, May 19, 1960)

In High School, Bill was Secretary of the Literature Club, associate editor of the school yearbook, manager of the varsity baseball team, a member of the Language Club, and a member of the Mathematics Club. (Springfield Union, May 19, 1960) At

his graduation ceremony in June of 1960, he gave a talk at on “Initiative”. He was the winner of the Rentschler Four-Year Mathematics Award, which is given to the graduating student receiving the highest scholastic rank in the four year college preparation program. (Springfield Union, June 25, 1960)

Bill’s Windsor Locks High School career was nothing short of phenomenal. As we shall see, it was a glimpse of things to come. Let’s look at his college life and his career.

Bill Taylor attended Trinity College in Hartford. He was on the Dean’s list every semester. In the summer after his Junior year, he participated in a special summer work-study program. It was sponsored by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company in Bloomfield. Its purpose was to acquaint the students with the workings of a large life insurance company. (Springfield Union, Aug 15, 1963)

In his Senior year at Trinity, Bill won the Mary Louise Guertin Actuarial award. He was selected on the basis of personal qualities indicating potential leadership in the actuarial profession, and for demonstrated scholarship in mathematics, economics and English. Bill was also the valedictorian of his class, and he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in Mathematics. (Springfield Union, October 26, 1964) In addition, he was a member of Sigma Pi Sigma, the national physics honor society, and Pi Gamma Mu, the national social science honor society. (Springfield Union, June 17, 1964)

The last two paragraphs are actually quite startling. How often does one come across a college student who is academically outstanding in mathematics, physics, economics, English and Social Science?

After graduating from Trinity College in June, of 1964, Mr. Taylor went to work in the actuarial department of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. in Bloomfield. Having taken a summer internship with them in the previous year, turned out to be a prescient thing to do. (Springfield Union, October 26, 1964)

He started off as an actuarial trainee at Connecticut General, and finished the required series of actuarial exams in 1968. By doing this, he became a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. After several brief assignments, he became the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Connecticut General’s biggest business (Healthcare) in 1971. At that time, he was 27 years old. Three years later, in 1974, he became the CFO of the Property and Casualty Division, which was the company’s biggest money loser. Mr. Taylor turned that Division around and made it the company’s biggest money maker. (The New York Times, Oct 29, 1987, Daniel R. Cuff, “Business People: Successor to Chief is Names at Cigna”)

In 1980, Bill became the CFO of Connecticut General. In 1982, eighteen years after he went to work at Connecticut General, the company merged with INA Corporation to form CIGNA. At that time, he was named Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the new CIGNA Corporation.

Mr. Taylor was 43 years old in 1986, when he was named Vice Chairman, Chief Operating Officer and a member of the board of CIGNA.

In 1988, he was named President and Chief Executive Officer of CIGNA, becoming the youngest CEO of a major US insurance company at that time.

He retired in 2000.

How well did CIGNA do under Mr. Taylor’s leadership?

Over the 13 years that he was CEO, the average annual return to shareholders was 23%. It is worthwhile to re-read the last sentence. His achievement was nothing short of astounding.

So what exactly is this CIGNA corporation that Bill Taylor headed up?

Cigna Corporation, through its subsidiaries, provides group life and health insurance, managed care, retirement products and services, and individual financial services worldwide. The Company also sells individual life and health insurance and annuity products in selected international locations.

How big is CIGNA?

- It has \$38 Billion in annual revenue
 - It is ranked number 90 on the Fortune 500.
 - It has about \$12 Billion in shareholder equity.
 - It has about 90 million customers
 - It has assets of \$57 Billion
 - It has more than 39,000 employees
- (<https://www.cigna.com/about-us/cigna-fact-sheet>)

To get an idea of how big CIGNA is, let's compare it with the state of Connecticut. Cigna takes in about \$38 Billion a year. Connecticut's annual budget is about \$8 Billion a year. While the comparison is far from perfect, we can see that Bill's company annually took in about five times as much as the state of Connecticut does. Bill Taylor managed CIGNA well for a long time. He is a person that Windsor Locks can well be proud of.

Interestingly enough, that is not all he did. He was also:

- a trustee of Philadelphia's Regional Performing Arts Center
- a trustee of the Philadelphia Orchestra.
- a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Enterprise Institute since 1989, and Board chairman from 1994 through 1998.

Of course, he was a husband and a father while doing all of this.

We would like all of our children to reach their full potential. In order to reach your full potential, you need to have some ideas as to what is possible. Good role models can make that happen. Windsor Locks has such role models. They include people who have made outstanding achievements in different fields. Three people that come to mind quickly are: Dr. Ettore Carneglia, Governor Ella Grasso and Wilson H. Taylor, in the fields of medicine, government and industry, respectively.

Chapter 31

The Dexter Dynasty

No family has had a more profoundly positive effect on the town of Windsor Locks than the Dexter family. They were here long before Windsor Locks was incorporated into a separate town. They were among the first builders of mills. They built the first school. They started the Dexter company and kept it going for more than two centuries, during which time, there were seven family members who led the company. The Dexter Corporation was one of the largest employers in Windsor Locks. It became a world-wide company which made a wide variety of different products over the decades. Dexter family members were business, town and civic leaders as well as generous philanthropists. They donated the land used for Windsor Locks High School which later became a Middle School, the land for a Windsor Locks Town Hall, and the land for the Windsor Locks Public Library. They also deeded the land on Main Street, on which the Congregational Church is situated, to the Church for \$1. They were responsible for the placement of the airfield that became Bradley Field in Windsor Locks rather than in another part of Connecticut.

A dynasty is a succession of people from the same family who play a prominent role in business, politics, or another field. This article is about a sequence of eleven members of the Dexter family over a period of ten generations (1660-2000), who accomplished outstanding achievements. The Dexter family really was a dynasty.

This article describes the seven individuals who ran the Dexter company throughout its 220 year life, and four of their ancestors. Seth Dexter II was the first Dexter to come to Pine Meadow, which later became Windsor Locks. This article covers Seth's father, grandfather, great-grandfather and finally his great-great-grandfather, Thomas Dexter, who founded the Dexter family. We shall see that the ancestors of the Dexters who moved to Pine Meadow were as accomplished as their descendants. It is nothing short of amazing to come across a family with ten generations of highly accomplished members. Thus the title of this article is "The Dexter Dynasty".

The Dexter Lineage prior to moving to Pine Meadow, Connecticut

Thomas Dexter (- 1677)

The information on Thomas Dexter comes from the Warden and Dexter (1905) book on the genealogy of the Dexter family. The family began with Mr. Thomas Dexter of Bristol England. He was a wealthy and educated man. According to Warden and Dexter: "He had received a good education, and wrote a beautiful hand, as papers now in existence will show, was a man of great energy of character, public-spirited, and ever ready to contribute to the support of any enterprise he thought to be of interest to the

colony; always independent, and fearless in the expression of his opinions.” In the prime of his life, he decided to come over to America in 1630, and settle in Massachusetts, along with three of his four children and some servants. There was no information about his wife.

Thomas Dexter settled on a farm of 800 acres in Lynn, Mass., where he had many servants. He was called “Farmer Dexter”. He was more than a farmer. He erected a bridge across the Saugus River, where he built the first iron works in that part of the country. The technology and much of the funding for that large project came from England, at the behest of Thomas Dexter. Iron ore was shipped in from the Cape. He moved to Sandwich, Mass., where he built the first grist mill there. In 1646, he and his family moved to Barnstable where he bought two farms. He bought more land from the Indian Chief, Pognanum, which he paid for with a suit of clothes. See the drawing below. Thomas Dexter did far more than farm in Lynn and in Barnstable. He built bridges, mills and roads, all of which contributed to his family’s good and to the public good. He gave one of his farms to his son, William. Thomas Dexter died in Boston in 1677.



**Thomas Dexter buying land from
Indian Chief Pognanum - about 1646**

We are tracing the lineage from Thomas Dexter to his great-great-grandson, Seth Dexter II, who moved to Connecticut in 1767. That lineage passes through Thomas’ son, William Dexter.

William Dexter (-1694)

William Dexter was born in England. He inherited one of his father's farms in Barnstable in 1650. He married Sarah Vincent in 1653. In 1657, he moved to Rochester, Mass. with a group of about 30 people. William and his wife, Sarah Vincent, had seven children, all born in Barnstable, Mass. By the time he died, he had amassed a considerable amount of land in both Barnstable and Rochester, which he gave to his children. He died in 1694.

Benjamin Dexter (1670-1732)

Benjamin Dexter was born in Barnstable, Mass. to William and Sara Vincent Dexter in 1670. Later, he moved to Rochester. He married Sarah Arnold in 1784. He was a successful farmer on the land he father had given him. He and his wife had eleven children, all born in Rochester. He died in 1732.

Seth Dexter I (1718-1793)

Seth Dexter I, was the seventh child of Benjamin and Sarah Dexter. He was born in 1718. He married a woman named Elizabeth. They had nine children. Seth was a successful clothier. He was also a community leader. In his community, he was a member of the town's Committee on Correspondence in 1772-3, a member of a committee to supply families of soldiers in the army, a church deacon, and the town clerk in 1750-1756. He lived in Rochester, MA, which is where he died in 1793.

Seth Dexter I passed his skills in the area of making cloth for clothes to his son, Seth Dexter II, who as we shall see, moved from Massachusetts to Connecticut in 1767. There are three persons in this lineage named Seth Dexter. For clarity, we will refer to them as Seth Dexter I, Seth Dexter II and Seth Dexter III. Some books and articles used the titles Sr. and Jr. to refer to the first and second Seth Thomases, and while others used those titles to refer to the second and third Seth Dexter. Roman numerals are use here to eliminate confusion.

As we have already seen, the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather of Seth Thomas I were all highly successful farmers, frontiersmen, builders, and businessmen. Now we turn to the sequence of Dexters in Connecticut who formed and led the Dexter company.

The Dexter Lineage in Connecticut

Seth Dexter II (1743-1793)

Seth Dexter II was the first child of Seth Dexter I and his wife, Elizabeth. He was born in 1743 in Rochester, MA. He married Deborah Haskell who was also born in

Rochester, MA. They moved to the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, Connecticut in 1767. Pine Meadow later became Windsor Locks. Jabez Haskell, Seth's brother in law, moved to Pine Meadow with him. The two were life-long business partners, They operated a number of successful businesses ventures.

According to Jabez Haskell (Historical Sketches, p. 126), Ephraim Haskell and Seth Dexter, of Rochester, Mass., bought the land lying east of Center Street, and from School Street on the South to Grove Street on the North, and still further North on Center Street. They bought 160 acres for £340 (\$7.08 per acre), including the saw-mill and an old house. The purchase took place in 1769. This purchase by Haskell and Dexter was made for their sons, Seth Dexter II, whose wife, Deborah Haskell was Ephraim's daughter, and Jabez Haskell, who was Ephraim's son. The reader should note that this 160 acres later became "downtown Windsor Locks".

In 1770, Seth Dexter I deeded his land in Pine Meadow to his son Seth Dexter II, who was also a clothier, and who set up the first "clothier works" in this part of the country. (Henry R. Stiles, The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, vol. 1)

The following four paragraphs are from "The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut, 1633-1884, vol. 2," by Trumbull, 1886.

"The first school-house was built about 1776, largely if not entirely by Jabez Haskell and Seth Dexter. It stood on the southeast corner of Elm and Centre streets, on Mr. Dexter's land; and they were probably the parties responsible for the support of the school..."

"For many years, woolen cloths were subjected to no finishing process after being taken from the loom. The first mill for cloth-dressing in this part of the country was set up here. Mr. Seth Dexter brought the art with him from the eastern part of Massachusetts, and set up his mill in 1770. ... Dexter's clothier works were run here about sixty years..."

"Water-power was first used to run a saw-mill on Kettle Brook, which was being built, or rebuilt, by the Denslow family in 1742; at that date, half of it was sold to Daniel Hayden, and afterward the other half was sold to his brother Isaac Hayden. About twenty years later, Daniel Hayden had failed, and in 1769 it passed into the hands of Haskell & Dexter, whose families operated it jointly three quarters of a century, when the Dexter family became sole owners, and they still continue it in operation."

"In 1784 Haskell & Dexter built a grist-mill below their saw-mill..."

From the above, we see that Seth Dexter II set up the beginnings of the Dexter company, and that it was already thriving. Seth Dexter II and his wife Deborah, had nine children between 1770 and 1789. All were born in Windsor, Conn. Seth Dexter II died in Windsor, Conn in 1797.

Seth Dexter III (1776-1841)

Seth Dexter III was the son of Seth Dexter II and his wife, Deborah Haskell. He was born in 1776. He married Sylvia Gaylord, and they had two children, Harriet C. Dexter in 1809 and Charles Haskell Dexter in 1810.

Seth Dexter III continued to run the businesses that his father had built, such as the woolen mill which continued to operate until 1817, when they sold the property to Timothy Mather. In 1784, he built a grist mill below his saw mill.



Seth Dexter III 1776-1841

In 1811, Seth Dexter III built a gin distillery. This was operated about twenty years, until about 1830. (from Jabez Haskell, Historical Sketches 1900). Under Seth Dexter III, the family business expanded.

Charles Haskell Dexter (1810-1869)

Charles Haskell Dexter was the son of Seth Dexter III and his wife, Sylvia. He was born on 19 September, 1810. Charles H. Dexter married Lydia Pierson in 1838. They had three children, Julia Sergeant Dexter (1839), Annie P. Dexter (1842), and Edwin D. Dexter (1847).

Charles H. Dexter, began experimenting with specialty paper in the basement of the grist mill. That research did not pay off right away, but it provided a vision for the future of the company. The Story of Windsor Locks (1954) says: "In the basement of the old grist mill, Charles H. Dexter produced about 200 pounds of hand-made Manilla wrappers per day. Being hampered for room and power, he moved his paper-making equipment into a frame building which was erected across the canal from the grist mill and in this building, the present business was begun."

Later, Charles H. Dexter succeeded his father, Seth Dexter III, in running the business. With his brother in law, Edwin Douglas, he reorganized the business under

the new name “C. H. Dexter & Company” in 1847. Edwin Douglas was also the on-site engineer for the Windsor Locks canal. When Edwin Douglas left, C. H. Dexter operated the company on his own.

In 1867, C. H. Dexter brought his son, Edwin Dexter, his son-in-law, Herbert R. Coffin, Sr., and his two grandsons, Herbert R. Coffin, Jr., and Arthur Dexter Coffin, into the business. He renamed the company “C. H. Dexter and Sons.” He made the company self-sustaining. He also helped to increase the use of water power, and to introduce different types of businesses in Windsor Locks.



Charles Haskell Dexter
~1833

Charles Haskell Dexter was also the town's first postmaster and he played a prominent role in the building and use of the canal in Windsor Locks. He was president of the Connecticut River Company, the association that promoted the canal construction. Charles Haskell Dexter died on Aug. 29, 1869.

Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr. (1840-1901)

Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr. was the husband of Julia S. Dexter, who was the daughter of Charles Haskell Dexter. In other words, he was C.H. Dexter's son-in-law. As we saw above, he was brought into the company by C.H. Dexter, along with C.H. Dexter's son, Edwin D. Dexter. When Edwin died, the full leadership of the company passed to Herbert R. Coffin, Sr.

The “Story of Windsor Locks 1663-1954” states: “Mr. Coffin greatly increased the size and capacity of the mills and began the manufacture of high grade tissues and various paper specialties.



Herbert Raymond Coffin Sr.
1840-1901



Edwin D. Dexter 1847-1886



Julia S. Dexter 1839-1914

Arthur D. Coffin (1868-1940) and Herbert R. Coffin, Jr. (1871-1938)

Arthur D. Coffin and Herbert R. Coffin Jr. , the sons of Herbert R. and Julia S. Dexter Coffin, continued the business after their father’s death in 1901. They maintained the old name.



Arthur Dexter Coffin
1868-1940



Herbert Raymond Coffin Jr.
1871-1938

According to the International Directory of Company Histories, Vol. 12: "After Herbert Coffin's death, his two sons, Arthur and Herbert Jr., operated the business as a partnership. Following incorporation in July of 1914, Arthur D. Coffin became president and Herbert Jr. became vice-president. In 1922, Arthur Coffin hired a young M.I.T. graduate, Fay Osborn, who played a principal part in the development of the porous long fiber tea bag paper which Dexter introduced in the 1930s. This same technology led to the development of the fibrous meat casing, as well as the stencil base tissue, and a general line of absorbent and filter paper that was still being produced in the late twentieth century."

Innovation and experimentation led Dexter to the forefront of new paper products. Dexter marketed the first toilet paper roll, which was sold with a wire loop so that it could be hung on a convenient hook or nail. The toilet paper came in two grades, but was discontinued in the early 1930s. The company also introduced the first catalogue cover paper, as well as the "electrolytic absorbent capacitor" paper, and patented a metal tarnish preventative tissue which sold extensively to the silverware manufacturers.

Dexter Drake Coffin (1898-1966)

Dexter Drake Coffin was the son of Arthur Dexter Coffin and his wife Cora. He married Elizabeth Dorr. They had two sons: Dexter Drake Coffin II and David Linwood Coffin.

In 1936, when Dexter Drake Coffin became president of the company, its main products were short fiber paper products, such as carbonizing tissue, lightweight air mail writing papers, and condenser tissues for the electrical industry. The company produced long fiber paper only on a limited basis. Under Dexter Coffin's administration, however, the company devoted 100 percent of its production to long fiber paper and webs for industrial uses.



Dexter Drake Coffin 1898-1966

Dexter Drake Coffin was an aviation enthusiast. When he heard that there was a plan to convert Brainard Field in Hartford into a military airport, he went into action to try to get the military airfield to be built in the tobacco fields of Windsor Locks. He was successful, and it eventually became Bradley Field. That story is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is too important not to mention here.

David Linwood Coffin I (1925-2012)

David Linwood Coffin was the son of Dexter Drake Coffin and his wife, Elizabeth. David Linwood Coffin's first wife was Barbara Van Gorder. His second wife was Marie Jeanne Cosnard de Closets. David L. Coffin started out as a salesman for the company in 1948.



David Linwood Coffin
1925-2012

According to the International Directory of Company Histories, Vol. 12: "David L. Coffin became Dexter's president in 1958. By then, the company had gained a reputation as being a stodgy old New England relic that was nearly stagnant. The company produced only paper products, opposed hiring from outside the Windsor Locks area, and prohibited borrowing from lending institutions. It lacked an organized sales force, and almost one-third of its personnel was 65 or older. To modernize the company's approach to business, David Coffin hired young professional managers and restructured the family controlled executive board to include outsiders. He instituted strong cost controls, and trained and organized a sales force."

He also established a plan for acquiring and divesting companies to achieve growth. Coffin's target for company growth was the field of specialty chemicals.

David Linwood Coffin wrote "The History of the Dexter Corporation 1767-1967." He was the 7th and last in the family to run the Dexter Corp. since it began in 1767.

1988 - The last year in which a member of the Dexter family was president of the company.

In 1988, a corporate restructuring ended in a management shift which was unprecedented in the 220 year history of the company. It was the first time that the leadership of the company was not under the descendent of Thomas Dexter. K. Graham Walker was selected to succeed David L. Coffin as the Dexter Corporation's president and chief executive officer.

To avoid a hostile takeover in 2000, the company sold all of its holdings. The Windsor Locks portion of C.H.Dexter Corp., known as the Dexter Non-woven Materials Division, was sold to the Finnish Ahlstrom Paper Group. That was the end of the C.H. Dexter Corp.

Conclusion

The founder of the Dexter family, Thomas Dexter, was an extremely capable farmer and maker of mills. In today's parlance, he was a "go-getter". His son, William, and William's son, Benjamin, and Benjamin's son, Seth Dexter I, were also entrepreneurs. All three were successful farmers and businessmen. They were willing to move to new, undeveloped areas and seek their fortunes, and they did well. Seth Dexter I was a clothier, and he passed his skills and attitudes to his son, Seth Dexter II, who moved to Pine Meadow, Windsor, Connecticut with his brother-in-law, Jabez Haskell. Seth and Jabez were given a large tract of land with a mill on it, and they started building businesses and expanding them.

The Dexter company started to grow, and it continued growth under a succession six more men who were descendants of Thomas Dexter, or who were offspring of Herbert Raymond Coffin, Sr., who married into the Dexter family.

In total, we saw 10 generations of highly successful Dexter family members. The six generations (seven men) in Windsor Locks built a company that became an international powerhouse, and lasted 220 years. It became the longest running company on the New York Stock Market. Windsor Locks grew along with the Dexter company. The Dexter company leaders were also community and church leaders in the town of Windsor Locks. They gave a great deal to the town.

In conclusion, we have seen that the Dexter family was a long-lived, powerful family. They were a dynasty. Windsor Locks was lucky to have them.

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Chapter 30

The Fifteen “Blocks” of Windsor Locks (1860-1970)

Language changes over time. One often encounters the term “block” when reading old newspaper articles about Windsor Locks. The term does not refer to the area between one cross street and another, such as the area on Main Street between Oak St. and Spring St. In those old newspapers, the term “block” was used to refer to a large, multi-purpose building, such as a building that had stores on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors.

For example, the building just south of Colapietro’s hotel on Main Street, was called the “Burnap block” after its owner, Dr. Sidney Burnap. It was a large multi-purpose building, with storefronts on the street level, an opera house, offices, the headquarters of the telephone company, a millinery store, a confectionary store, and a “Polish Rooming House”. This paper examines the fifteen blocks of downtown Windsor Locks, and the people who owned them. Such buildings no longer exist. Now the world has shopping malls, and business parks, but they are not the same thing. The people who owned these blocks are worth learning about. They were the “movers and shakes” of their day.

In the 1880 - 1920 time frame, when European immigrants were coming to Windsor Locks in large numbers, wealthy people and up-and-comers who believed that the future was bright, built such buildings, looking to enrich the downtown area while enriching themselves.

As we shall see, the blocks of Windsor Locks had similarities and differences. Some of the owners built residences for themselves and their families into the building, as well as space for their own family businesses. Others preferred to live elsewhere. Such was the case with Dr. Burnap, who lived in a magnificent house on Maple that was so large that it was called “The Castle.” It was situated on a 100 acre plot of land on Maple St. Others, like Dr. Coogan, who built his block at the southern end of Main St., built a living area for his family in his block, as well as his offices, and rooms for other businesses.

While many of these were actually called blocks, such as the Mather block, The Bidwell block and the Outerson block, others were not. Examples include the Rialto Theater building, Colapietro’s Hotel, the Beehive building and the Tate building. However, they were true multi-purpose buildings, which housed a number of businesses and stores.

The people who built these Blocks were dynamic people. They were entrepreneurs. They believed in themselves and in their town. Most of them were leaders in social clubs, churches and town government. They were creative people in a changing world, and they were open to change. One good example is Mr. John E. Mooney. Mr. Mooney was lauded in the newspapers for building his block on the corner of Oak and Center Streets rather than in the crowded Main St. area, where all of

the other blocks were built. His block contained a general purpose hall for dances, meetings and shows, along with his hardware store and his mortuary business. Another good example was Dr. Burnap, who had a large room in his block with a floor that was built on large steel springs to give it a springy feel for dancing.

There were fifteen of these blocks in downtown Windsor Locks. We could examine them alphabetically or chronologically, but neither of those approaches seems to add additional wisdom or insight. Rather, let's examine them in the order they were situated along Main Street, starting with the Coogan block which was on the southern end, and going down Main St. as far as the Tate block, which was on the northern end of Main St. By doing this, we only miss one of them, the Mooney Block, which we shall consider last (but not least).

A final point to be made before discussing each of the blocks, is that they all had ownership changes over time. The Coffin block later became the Zaccheo block and still later became the Preli and Lunn building. The Burnap block became the Center Hall block, and later the Graziani block. Some, such as the Beehive Building, were demolished early, while many of the blocks were demolished in the "re-development" of Main St. which happened in 1970s. Reading about the vibrant and bustling blocks will give the reader a feel for the extraordinary energy, hope, and entrepreneurial spirit of the Windsor Locks of an earlier time.

When studying the blocks of Windsor Locks, one has to keep in mind that there were other types of entrepreneurship going on in the town at the same time. This was only one type. There was the long string of mills that were flourishing along the canal. These were the biggest employers in the area at the time. There were also men who invested in farms, while others who invested in single family houses and in multifamily houses in town. This was an exciting time. While the past had been bleak for the increasing number of immigrants flowing into Windsor Locks, the future looked very bright. These entrepreneurs were in full entrepreneurial mode.

On the following page, there is a map of downtown Windsor Locks which shows the location of each of the fifteen blocks. We shall follow that map from south to north and then examine the one remaining block, which was on the corner of Oak and Center Streets.

The Downtown Blocks of Windsor

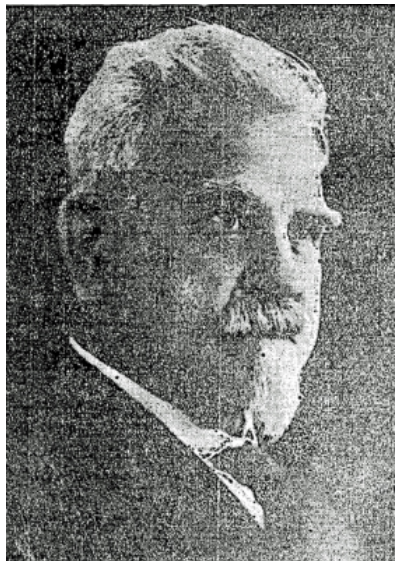
Center St.		Tate Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	Main St.
		Beehive Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Grove St.			
		Moran Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Colapietro Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mooney Block	Burnap Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Oak St.			
		Pease Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Rialto Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Bidwell Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Converse Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Spring St.			
		Mather Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Outerson Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Church St.			
	Barrett Block	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Coffin's Block	<input type="checkbox"/>		
State St.				
	Coogan's Block	<input type="checkbox"/>		

The Coogan Block

The Coogan block was on the South corner of Main and State Streets. It was earlier known as "Brown's Hall". Here is an early photo of the Coogan block in which you can see the stores on the street level. Following that is a photo of Dr. Joseph A. Coogan.



The Coogan Block, corner of State St & Main St.



*Dr. Joseph A. Coogan
Dean of Physicians of
Hartford County, CT*

Dr. Joseph A. Coogan was an extraordinarily accomplished man. He had a wide background for a small town doctor. He went to college at Holy Cross and Fordham, and received medical training at Bellevue Medical College. He had travelled widely through Europe. Before settling in Windsor Locks, he had an office in Hartford for twelve years, and he had practiced medicine in Los Angeles.

According to the Springfield Republican newspaper of March 23, 1930, "Dr. Coogan is a picturesque survival of the old type of family physician. His offices in Windsor Locks are on the ground floor of the Coogan block, and the waiting room bears unmistakable evidence of once having served as a drug store. A counter lines either side, and on one of the shelves is still to be found a placard advertising a patent medicine. Other shelves hold the doctor's medicine bottles, rolls of bandages and other necessities. ... In spite of his years, he is an energetic practitioner, going daily about his calls, for his practice is still large, though he commandeers a chauffeur to drive him on his rounds. He is known for the accuracy and range of his memory. Although there are four other physicians in town, Dr. Coogan is the dean, and he is ranked highly as a consultant.... Dr. Coogan was born in Windsor Locks. His father and mother came from Ireland in 1844. He lives with his wife and daughter in rooms over his offices. He has practiced in Windsor Locks for the past 40 years, returning there after a severe attack of pneumonia during his practice in Los Angeles, California. For many years, he was the general chairman of the Democratic town committee and, with his five brothers, has represented his county in the Connecticut Legislature."

The Springfield Republican issue of June 8, 1938 had an article about the Coogan block being torn down. The building had two stores on the first floor, three tenements on the second floor, and three meeting halls on the third. At one time, the ground floor was occupied by a drug store conducted by Joseph A. Coogan, while on the North side was the grocery store of Roscoe W. Prentice. Dr. Coogan and his family occupied one of the tenements on the second floor, while his sister occupied the other. The halls on the top floor served as the meeting places of the Riverside council of the Knights of Columbus from 1855 until 1921. The Euclid lodge of Masons had their headquarters on the third floor before they moved to the Converse Block.

John Zaccheo, the oldest son of Tommasso Zaccheo, who later bought the block on the other side of State Street, said that Dr. Coogan and his wife were very nice to the neighborhood children. John said that Dr. Coogan's wife sometimes invited them in for cookies and lemonade.

Dr. Coogan died of pneumonia on Nov. 24, 1933, at the age of 84. The pneumonia, which followed an accident three weeks earlier, when he fell and broke his hip. His wife was Margaret E. Brady Coogan (1852-1939). They had a daughter, Mary Laurentia Coogan (1883-1939). Coogan's Block was later replaced by the Barberi Esso Station, which later was owned by Vinnie Musco.

The Coffin Block

Coogan's block was on the South corner of State and Main Streets. Coffin's block was on the North corner. It was a Greek-revival style building with a portico, and

was painted white. Over the decades, the facade changed. The photo below was taken long after Coffin had sold the building.



Coffin Block: white building on left. Photo taken later when owned by T. Zaccheo. Barrett Block on right.

The following photo of the Coffin block and the Barrett Block is much older. You can see the type of facade it once had. Unfortunately the photo only shows a small portion of the Coffin block. Notice in this photo that the Coffin block had three floors.



Coffin Block Barrett Block

Herbert Raymond Coffin bought the block shortly after he married his wife, Julia, in 1866. H. R. Coffin was a very important man. He was the sole proprietor of C.H. Dexter & Sons, President of the Connecticut River Co., and a Director of the

Connecticut Banking Co., the Medlicott Co., and the Windsor Locks Bridge Co. He and his wife, Julia, lived in the Ashmere estate, not far from the Coffin block. We will see the large role that the Lincoln Institute played in the Coffin Block. That was brought about by his wife, Julia, who was a member of the Congregational Church, which sponsored the Lincoln Institute. Below is a photo of Herbert Raymond Coffin.



Herbert R. Coffin 1840-1877

Mr. C. W. Watrous was a tenant of the Coffin block. The Windsor Locks Journal of June 19, 1888 said that a fire occurred in the furniture rooms of Mr. C. W. Watrous in the Coffin block. There are three more tenants of the Coffin block that we have information on: the Lincoln Institute, a harness shop and a baker. Let us look at each of them.

The biggest tenant of the Coffin Block was the Lincoln Institute, which leased most of the Coffin Block. They were a group formed by the Congregational Church of Windsor Locks to help the Italian immigrants assimilate into American culture and into life in Windsor Locks. The Lincoln Institute was well described in the Feb. 16, 1908 issue of the Springfield Republican newspaper. Here are some excerpts from that article: "The Lincoln Institute started with the idea that the Italians were infinitely more in need of instruction in the language, customs and institutions of this country than of religious instruction. ... It is realized that the first desire of the young Italian immigrant is to learn our language ... Therefore the Institute tries to get hold of young Italian boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 22 or 23 years as soon as possible. The Institute occupies two floors of a building on Main St. First comes a reading room and library with books and American and Italian newspapers, then a general classroom with blackboards, ... On the top floor are the rooms of the Lincoln club and the rooms of the superintendent."

The Lincoln Institute not only taught English to the Italian immigrants, but also taught music, and had an orchestra. They gave sewing lessons to the Italian girls. This was a large organization which occupied a large space in the Coffin Block. The June 1, 1913, issue of the Springfield Union had an article on the Lincoln Institute that showed the organization was still going strong seven years after the last article what we

looked at. It is quite interesting that the Congregational Church would seek to do this much for the Italians, who were all Roman Catholics, and to keep it up for so long. No more articles about the Lincoln Institute could be found after 1913.

The Lincoln Institute was not the only operation going on in the Coffin Block. The Coffin Block rented offices and stores to others. The April 26, 1902, issue of the Springfield Republican said that James E. Carroll was moving his harness shop to the Coffin Block. The building he was in formerly was being moved to make room for the new post office that was being erected by Mr. A. W. Converse.

The May 23, 1938, issue of the Springfield Republican had an obituary for J. Henry Spenkoch, and it described his life. It said that he was considered one of the best bakers in the area, having conducted business at the Barberi's Home Style Bakery on Main St for over ten years. Prior to that, he was the chief baker at the Beroth Bakery that was located in the Coffin block. According to Mickey Danyluk, there was another baker in the Coffin block, probably at an earlier time, whose name was Theodore Schottmuller (1865-1928).

There is an excellent biography of H.R. Coffin in "Men of Progress: Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in the state of Connecticut," which was compiled by Richard Herndon, New England Magazine: Boston, 1898. Tommaso Zaccheo arrived in Windsor Locks from Italy in 1916. His oldest son, John, told me in a telephone conversation that his father, Tommaso Zaccheo, bought the Coffin Block in about 1920, which is shortly after newspaper articles about the Coffin Block stopped showing up in newspapers. John said that the first business that his father started in the building was an "Armchair Restaurant". Armchair restaurants were popular at that time. They were inexpensive eateries which cut back on expenses by eliminating the need for waitresses. The customer picked up his food from the counter and brought it to a chair with one arm which was wide enough to serve as a table.

Later, Tommaso Zaccheo shut down the restaurant and opened the first Pontiac dealership in the area. After a while, he hired a man to open a garage (a car repair shop) on the site. He also had a gas station. Tommaso came up with the idea of putting an awning over the gas pumps to shelter customers from the sun and rain. While that is common now, Mr. Zaccheo claimed to have come up with the idea. Mr. Zaccheo sold the property in 1937, and moved to Westfield, MA, to become a "gentleman farmer". The next owners of the building were Mr. Preli and Mr. Lunn, who opened up a large Norge appliance dealership.

The Barrett Block

The Barrett block was built in 1913. It was the red brick building on the North side of the Coffin block, as can be seen in the following photo of the two buildings. The Coffin block and the Barrett block are marked in the caption. If you look on the right side of the photo, which is the northerly direction, you will see that there are two shorter, smaller buildings after the Barrett building. In later years, these became the Karges shoe store and the Bridgeview Restaurant. That building that housed the restaurant was on the corner of Church Street.



Coffin Block

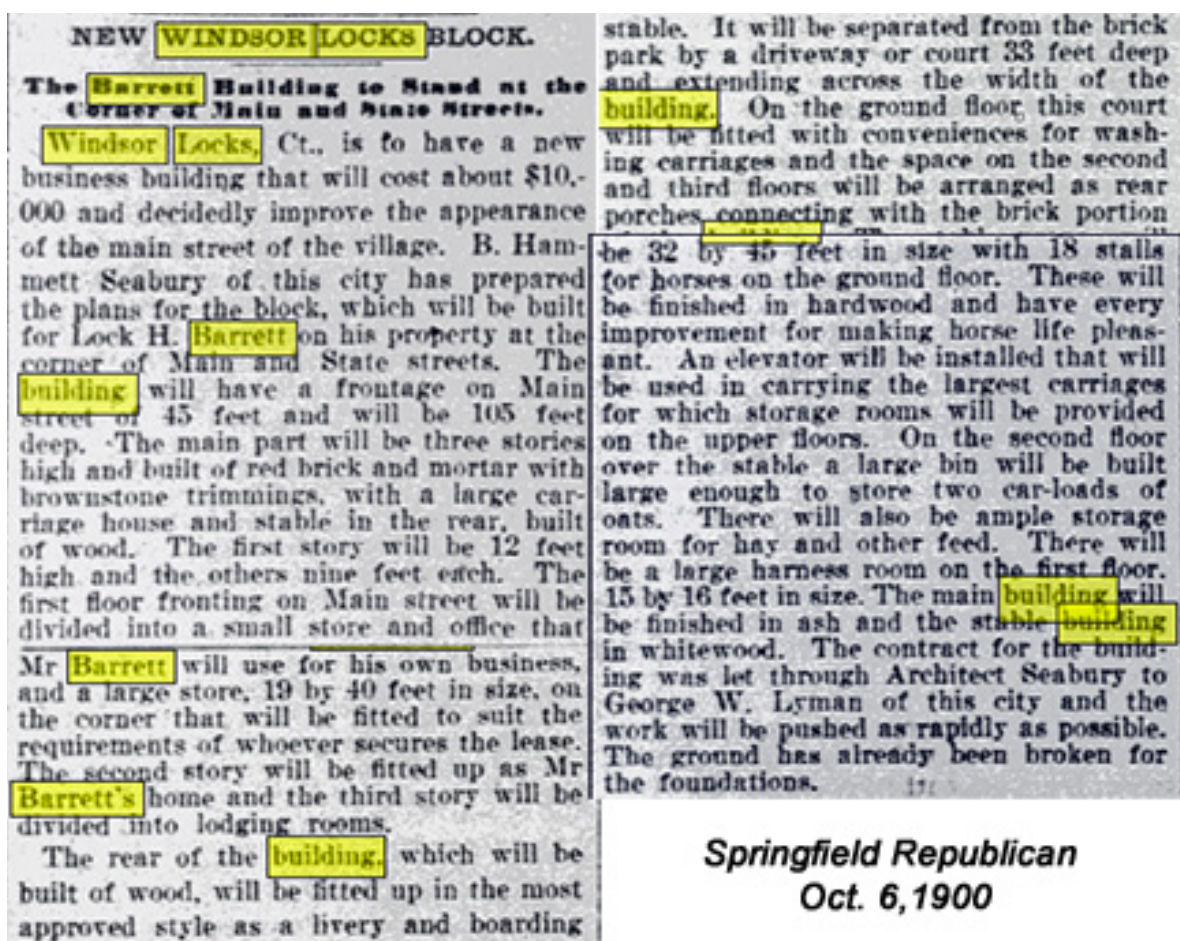
Barrett Block

Next is a closeup of the store on the near corner of the Barrett block. It was Dominick Alfano's market. As you can see, they sold bread, fruit, ice cream and sundries. Stores like this were referred to as confectionary stores. Later, Leo Viola took over this store, but it remained the same type of store. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks listed Leo Viola's store.



Dominick Alfano's store in the Barrett building

The Oct. 6, 1900 edition of the Springfield Republican had an excellent article stating that Mr. Lock Barrett was about to build the Barrett block, and it describes the contents and layout of the building. That article and a photo of the Barrett block follow.



That article describes the building very well. Like so many of the other block owners, Mr. Barrett was going to live there, and also rent out rooms. He would have a store to lease and he would have his own business office at the street level.

Below is a photo of the Barrett block with the sign "Barrett Block" showing near the top of the building. You can see Leo Viola's confectionary shop on the left, and Mr. Barrett's "Coal and Wood" office on the right side of the building. The Union Barber Shop was between the two.

Unfortunately, Mr. Barrett did not live very long. He died of a strange case of blood poisoning in 1913. The following article from the Aug. 6, 1913 issue of the Springfield Union gives the details. Lock Barrett's widow sold the coal and wood business to Dan Leach. Leach's coal and wood business was located where Windsor Locks Commons Plaza now (2016) stands.



Barrett Block at left, with Leo Viola's store on left corner. Mr. Barrett's office at right of Viola's

LOOK H. **BARRETT.**

Windsor Locks Business Man Dies of Blood Poisoning.

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn., Aug. 5—Lock H. **Barrett**, 49 years old, one of the best-known liverymen and coal dealers in the state, and one of the leading business men of this place, died this morning of blood poisoning at his Main street home, after only a few days' illness. Last Thursday Mr. **Barrett** went to Savin Rock with his family on the **Windsor Locks** Business Men's association outing in his automobile. He scratched a pimple on his face and on the return trip that evening said that the pimple pained him. He rubbed it with his auto glove. It is thought by the physicians that the glove must have infected the pimple and caused blood poisoning. Mr. Barrett grew worse Sunday night and failed rapidly until the end.

Springfield Union, Aug. 6, 1913



Architect drawing for Barrett Building, 1900

Soon afterwards, the Barrett block was bought by the Colapietro brothers of Windsor Locks. Finding the following two articles came as a great surprise to me, since Vito Colapietro, the owner of Coly's Hotel on Main St, was my grandfather. I knew him well. Yet he never mentioned owning this property.

BIG REAL ESTATE DEAL.

The Ten Broeck, Capon & Terry real estate agency has sold for Mrs. Helen E. Barrett of Windsor Locks, Conn., the property consisting of a three-story business block, also two-story brick block and one-story brick block on Main street, and stable property on Church street, Windsor Locks, to Colapietro Bros., of the same town, who bought for investment. This sale is the largest in the real estate line that has taken in that town in several years. The same firm will sell for Mrs. Barrett the entire livery stock and business of the late L. H. Barrett at auction on the 9th.

Springfield Daily News, Apr. 1, 1914

Here is a second article which provides more detail about the sale. Much searching did not uncover any further information about the Colapietro brothers owning, operating or selling this property. It is possible that it was taken over by one of Vito's brothers, or that it was sold quickly, and Vito Colapietro used the proceeds to buy his hotel. Given that he had only been in this country since 1906, and he bought the hotel in 1916, he must have obtained a good deal of money in a short time, which gives some credence to the idea that the Barrett property was bought and sold quickly. Here is the second article on the subject.

Barrett Block Is Sold.

Another large real estate deal was consummated last night when the fine business block of the late Lock H. Barrett on Main street was sold by Mrs Barrett to the Colapietro brothers. The property comprises the three-story brick block, occupied by Mrs Barrett and family as their home on the upper floors and rented for stores and the livery office on the ground floor, and the livery stable, carriage shed and storage rooms in the rear, and also the brick building at the corner of Main and Church streets occupied by J. E. Carroll as a harness store on the lower floor and a tenement upstairs. The vacant lot at the rear of the corner store is also included in the deal. The price for the entire property was \$19,000. Pasquale Colapietro runs a fruit store in the Mather block now, and his brothers, Leo and Vito, conduct a similar store on High street in Holyoke. For the present there will be no changes in the tenants of the buildings, as most of them have leases for a few years more to run. The office

will be continued to be used by the L. H. Barrett company, which was organized last week to continue the coal and trucking business. Mrs Barrett will reside upstairs until she secures another house elsewhere soon. There is a barber shop in one of the stores and a fruit store in the other. The disposal of the livery business is yet undecided, but it is thought that Jeremiah Gallagher may take hold of that part of the business on his own account, as he has had several years' experience with Mr Barrett and is conversant with the conducting of that pretty well. Arrangements for the lease of the barns to him for that purpose will be taken up today by the new owners. The business block is of modern construction, as it is one of the best appearing structures on the Main street of the town, being located in the central part of the town, opposite the approach to the suspension bridge, and the sale is the biggest in the real estate line that has taken place in the town for several years.

Springfield Republican, March 31, 1914

No further articles were found in newspapers concerning the Barrett block after the above two articles.

The Outerson Block

If anyone ever writes a book about the 25 greatest men of Windsor Locks, James D. Outerson will surely be in it. The best brief description of his life was given in the Sept. 15, 1936 issue of the Springfield Republican newspaper. James D. Outerson was born in 1872 and died in 1936. He was known throughout the state of Connecticut for his long and distinguished work for the town of Windsor Locks. He held the triple position of town clerk, treasurer and registrar. While he was a staunch Democrat, he was usually nominated for those posts by both the Democrat and Republican Parties. He held those offices from 1895 until he died. However, that is not all. He was Secretary of the Building and Loan Association, a local collector for the gas and electric company, a member of the Knights of Columbus, and an official with the Chamber of Commerce. But that is not all. He was an accomplished musician. He led a local orchestra, and was the organist at St. Mary's Church. A search of local newspaper articles found 44 articles spanning his lifetime. The amazing thing they show is that very often, when there was a big problem, he was the man who was put in charge of fixing it. During World War II, there were a number of fundraisers and other things that had to be done by the town. Mr. Outerson was always the person to head the project, or at least to be the treasurer of the project.

On top of all of this, Mr. Outerson was an active businessman. He had a mens furnishings business that thrived in Windsor Locks. He also ran an insurance and bonding agency.

He owned the Outerson block on the North corner of Church and Main Streets. While no records could be found on the exact date he bought or built it, the May 27, 1887 issue of the Springfield Republican newspaper said that the ground in front of the Outerson block was being covered with a layer of gravel. This is interesting because he would have only been 17 at that time. The April 12, 1900 issue of the same newspaper shows that Mr. Lee Roberts, a jeweler, had rented a part of the store of James D. Outerson.

The July 10, 1904 issue of the Springfield Republican said that Mr. James D. Outerson was moving his business from the Burnap block (north corner of Oak and Main Streets) to his new store, and that he was moving all of the books and papers, vaults and safes containing documents of the town of Windsor Locks to his new location. The new location was that which had just been vacated by Mr. M. J. King on Main St. This article did not give the exact location of this building, but the location is made clear in other newspaper articles such as the Sept. 1, 1914 issue of the Springfield Republican which shows that Mr. John T. Kane was opening a new drug store in the Outerson block on the corner of Church and Main Streets. Over the years, a series of drug stores occupied that same store on the corner of the Outerson block. The Dec. 10, 1954 issue of the Springfield Union newspaper said that the LaPoll Pharmacy was moving in to the corner store in the former Outerson block.

Mr. James D. Outerson was one of the most outstanding and accomplished men that Windsor Locks ever produced. Below are two photos. The first is of a portion of

the Outerson block at the time it was owned by Mr. Outerson. The second is a later (1950s) photo of the same building.



Brick building on left is the Outerson Block. Notice the "Town Clerk" and "Tax Collector" signs on the windows. It is on the North corner of Church and Main Streets, facing Main St.



***Brick building on left is the former Outerson Block.(Late 1950s)
It is on the North corner of Church and Main Streets.***

The Mather Block

Mr. William Mather was, as the owners of the other blocks were, a major player in the town of Windsor Locks. Like the others, he didn't watch things happen, he made things happen. The Nov. 12, 1914 issue of the Springfield Republican described his life in his obituary. They said that he was one of the town's most respected citizens. At the time he died, he was the president of the Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit Company, which he was largely responsible for establishing. He was born in 1840. He started in business by getting into the grocery business and into the dry goods business with his father. He had a "fancy and dry goods" store in his Mather block, which he sold in 1905 to focus on the new banking business that he was organizing at the time.



Mather Block (tall brick building at left) ~1915

Mr. Mather was a director and President of the defunct "Windsor Locks Savings Bank," which went under because the bank's treasurer, Mr. Converse, stole about \$185,000 from it. Mr. Converse committed suicide. The Bank finally went into receivership and those who had money in the bank lost about three quarters of their savings. Mr. Mather resigned from his position with the Bank. That whole episode wore heavy on Mr. Mather for the rest of his life.

Mr. William Mather built the Mather block in 1870, together with his father. Together, they ran a dry goods business there. (Mickey Danyluk) There were newspaper articles about the Mather block from 1890 to 1928. Let's take a look at what those articles had to say about the Mather block. The Springfield Republican (Feb. 19, 1890) said that Mrs. C.A. Loomis had closed her millinery store in the

Connelly building, but reopened in the Mather Block. The Springfield Republican of May 19, 1904 said that Mr Ladell will take over the drug store of J. W. Roberts. The Springfield Republican of March 17, 1909 said that Theta Iota Phi rents rooms in the Mather block, and that they are forming a baseball team. It doesn't say what type of club this was, but they are big enough to have their own orchestra, which will be playing at a dance in Mooney Hall.

The Springfield Republican of March 31, 1914 tells us that Pasquale Colapietro, who goes by the Americanized name of Patsy Coly runs a fruit store in the Mather block, and that Pasquale and his brothers, Vito and Leo, just bought the Barrett block!

The Springfield Republican of Nov 12, 1914 has the obituary of William Mather, but it doesn't say what is going to happen to the Mather block. Mr. Mather was 65 years old and had been ill for fifteen months.

The Springfield Republican issues of Feb. 3 and of Feb. 7, 1915 provide more detailed information. The Mather block was then the property of Mary Mather, the widow of Fred L. Mather. The building was entirely occupied by her two sons for their businesses on the ground floor, and with their families on the upper floors. Obviously one of the newspaper articles is in error. If the Colapietro brothers bought the Mather block in 1914, it wouldn't have been owned by the widow, Mrs. Mather in 1915.

The Springfield Republican of June 21, 1915 tells us that Mrs. Cora Learmont bought the millinery business of Mrs. L. N. Martel which had been there for 15 years. The Feb. 3, 1917 issue of the same newspaper says that the novelty store owned by Mandel Kurzmack was sold to David Scherry. The Jan. 11, 1917 issue of the Springfield Republican described a meeting of the stockholders of the Windsor Locks Safe Deposit and Trust Company in which the entire set of directors were re-elected. The business of the bank was showing steady improvement.

On New Year's Day of 1924, a fire burned a good deal of the building. It started in the shop of the Windsor Locks Macaroni Company, which was owned by Leo Colapietro, the brother of Vito and Pasquale Colapietro. Police officers noticed the smoke and roused the people living in the upper floors, so that no one was hurt. The fire started in the basement of the Macaroni company where the electrical equipment was located, and spread to the floor of the bank and up to the second floor where the millinery store and the music studio of Fred. C. Abbe was located, as well as storage rooms for the macaroni company. The flames got up to the apartment of Mrs Maggie Pease on the third floor. The Mather interests were covered by insurance, but those of the macaroni firm were only partially covered. The other tenants had no insurance.

The May 20, 1928 issue of the Springfield Republican said that the Windsor Locks library had once been housed in the Mather Block, but is now housed across the street in the Converse Block, which is also referred to as the Masonic block. Many will remember that as the building in which the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was in.

Here is a photo of the Mather block as it appeared around 1950.



Mather Block (with Carlisle store and Bank) ~1950

According to the Springfield Republican of April 12, 1937, Mr. L. D. Cutler, a local department store owner, purchased the Mather block from Walter H. Perry, the state bank commissioner, and receiver for the closed Windsor Locks Trust and Safe Deposit Company. The article says that Mr Cutler is the oldest and most successful merchant in Windsor Locks, having started in the jewelry and optical business in the old Coogan block in 1905. In 1918, he bought out the shoe and furnishing company of Frank G. Burt and took over his store in the Converse (Masonic) block. Mr Cutler moved to the larger space in the Mather block in 1922 and now needs more space. He took over the entire first floor of his new building.

The Springfield Republican of July 20, 1945, shows the sale of the Mather block by Mr. Cutler to the People's Cooperative, which will use the space for a grocery and meat store.

The Converse Block (also called the Masonic Block)

Below is a photo of the Converse block which was on the Northern corner of Spring and Main Streets. At the top of the front of the building, it says: "Masonic Hall" in brick in a semi-circle on the top half of the building. This building was also referred to sometimes as the Masonic block.



***Converse Block was also called "Masonic Block"
It housed the Post Office and the Library.
Corner of Spring St. and Main St.
Lighter building on right was the Bidwell Block.***

This building was erected in 1902 and owned by Alfred Wood Converse, who was a very interesting character. He was born in 1835 to Hannibal A. Converse and his wife Julia. Mr. Converse's interests and works were numerous. He was the longest serving postmaster in Windsor Locks. He was appointed as postmaster by President Andrew Johnson in 1866 and held that post until his death in 1912, except for the two terms of President Cleveland. This was a political appointment. President Cleveland was a Democrat, while Mr. Converse was a staunch lifelong Republican. So he was a postmaster for a total of 36 years.

He fought in the Civil War, and was wounded in 1863. Shortly after that, he left the Army. For the rest of his life, Mr. Converse supported the military and veterans from Windsor Locks. His father, Hannibal Converse had built an iron foundry, which was later owned and run by Alfred Wood Converse, who was more commonly referred to as "A. W. Converse". (information of last two paragraphs is from the Springfield Republican of July 16, 1911)

The Springfield Republican of June 12, 1869 tells us that the Euclid Lodge of the Masons had just been established in Windsor Locks and that Mr. Converse was elected a "Steward" of the club. He was a strong supporter of this group for the rest of his life. In May, 1871, he and a group from Windsor Locks formed the "Windsor Locks Savings Bank". He started off as the secretary and treasurer of the Bank. The vice-president of the bank was Jabez H. Hayden. In addition to being Postmaster and running an Iron

Foundry, we see in the Hartford Daily Courant of Oct. 8, 1874, that he was again elected to the position of Town Clerk, a position that he had held for years. In many of the articles in which his name appears, the authors go out of their way to comment that he has been doing a very good job.

The Springfield Republican of July 21, 1875 said that Mr. James L. Price opened a harness shop in the Converse block. The May 27, 1888 issue of the same newspaper said that Mr. Converse, on behalf of the local Grand Army chapter, held a meeting to propose that a Memorial Hall be built to honor Windsor Locks citizens who were veterans or who had died. However only 12 people showed up for the meeting. So the group that he led proposed to privately fund the building of the Memorial Hall whether or not the Town contributed. The Grand Army of the Republic, for those who are not familiar with it, was a fraternal group of veterans of the Civil War who fought on the Union side.

The Springfield Republican of April 22, 1890 said that the Post Office just moved back to the Converse Block. Given that A. W. Converse is the Postmaster, and that he has his own building, this seems reasonable. The Springfield Republican issue of Oct. 5, 1902 said that the Post Office was coming back to the Converse block. That meant that it had moved away for a while.

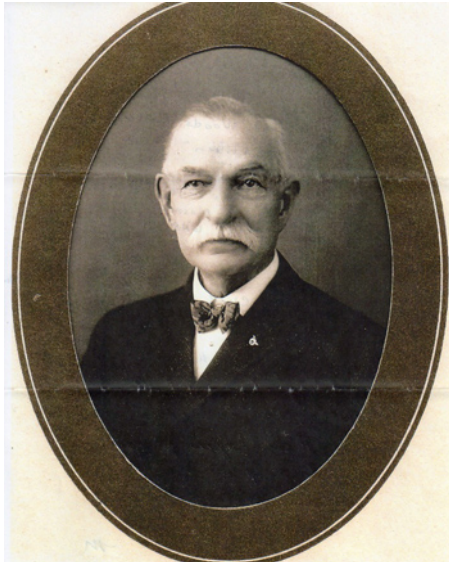
The new Converse Block was ready for the Post Office and much more. The store next to the Post Office was leased to F. G. Bert who ran a shoe store. The front rooms on the second floor and rooms on the South side were leased to Brown and Co., who are milliners. There is also a large room in the rear of the millinery store which is leased to the Masons. The entire upper floor of the building has been leased to the Masons. Besides the large main hall, there is a large banquet hall, coat room, ante-room and closet. The photo of the Converse block that was shown above is the one which opened in 1902. No photos could be found of the original Converse block.

The article on the new Converse block also reviewed Mr. Converse's career in glowing terms. It is worth presenting here. He was first introduced to business by his father, who owned a foundry, known as H. A. Converse & Co. After the death of his father, the company was known as A. W. Converse & Co. and it was a prominent business in Windsor Locks for years. Finally Mr. Converse sold it to Horton & Sons, who kept the business going. Mr. Converse was appointed Postmaster in 1868. Also, he has been treasurer of the Savings Bank for many years, and for 15 years, he has been the Town Clerk. The latter is an elected position and Mr. Converse kept being winning the elections in spite of the fact that he has always been a Republican and Windsor Locks has always been a Democratic bastion. He also owns and operates an insurance agency. He has also been active in the Masons, the Grand Army of the Republic, and was instrumental in getting the Memorial Hall built and he built and runs the new Converse block. This is an impressive resume.

The last chapter in A. W. Converse that will be covered here is a sad one. In 1912, he shot himself in the chest with a pistol while in his own home. He claimed he was cleaning his pistol when it discharged. He called for help and was taken to his sister's house where he died on January 14, 1912. His sister was Dr. Sidney R. Burnap's widow. Two weeks after Mr. Converse's death, Windsor Locks Bank officials confirmed that \$185,000 had been stolen from the safe. The legal suit that resulted

from the missing money went on for two years. The Savings Bank went out of business. This was a long and painful chapter in Windsor Locks history.

The Converse block later became the property of the Italian Cooperative. Finally it housed the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette (Mickey Danyluk).



Alfred Wood Converse 1911



Alfred Wood Converse 1835-1912

While Mr. Converse's final act, stealing money from his bank was an abominable act, his accomplishments during his career were outstanding. Because of both of these things, he is a man worth studying.

The Bidwell Block

The photo in the previous section on the Converse block has a good close-up of the early days of the Bidwell block. Here is another photo which shows a wider view of Main St, and how the blocks are situated with regard to one another.



*Mather
block*

*Converse
(Masonic)
block*
Spring St.

*Bidwell
block*

*Rialto
block*

*Pease
block*

*Coly
block*

*Goldfarb
(Moran)
block*

Burnap (Central Hall, Graziani) block

Frederick S. Bidwell died at the age of 79 in Windsor Locks, where he had lived for 50 years. He had long been involved with the lumber business. In 1868, Mr. T. I. Pease bought out the lumber business of H. C. Douglas of Windsor Locks, and Mr. Bidwell came in as manager. In 1888, he bought the business from Mr. Pease and conducted it by himself for years. In 1909 he brought his son, Fred S. Bidwell into the business, under the name of F. S. Bidwell Co. It was one of the largest lumber companies in the Northeast. The elder Mr. Bidwell managed the business until 1927, when his son took over. Like so many of the other owners of Windsor Locks blocks that we have discussed, the elder Mr. Bidwell was active in town business, social and fraternal affairs. He has been on the board of selectmen and the board of education. He was a Mason, a Republican, a member of the Congregational church, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a founder of the Thompsonville Press. (Springfield Republican, Jan. 6, 1928)

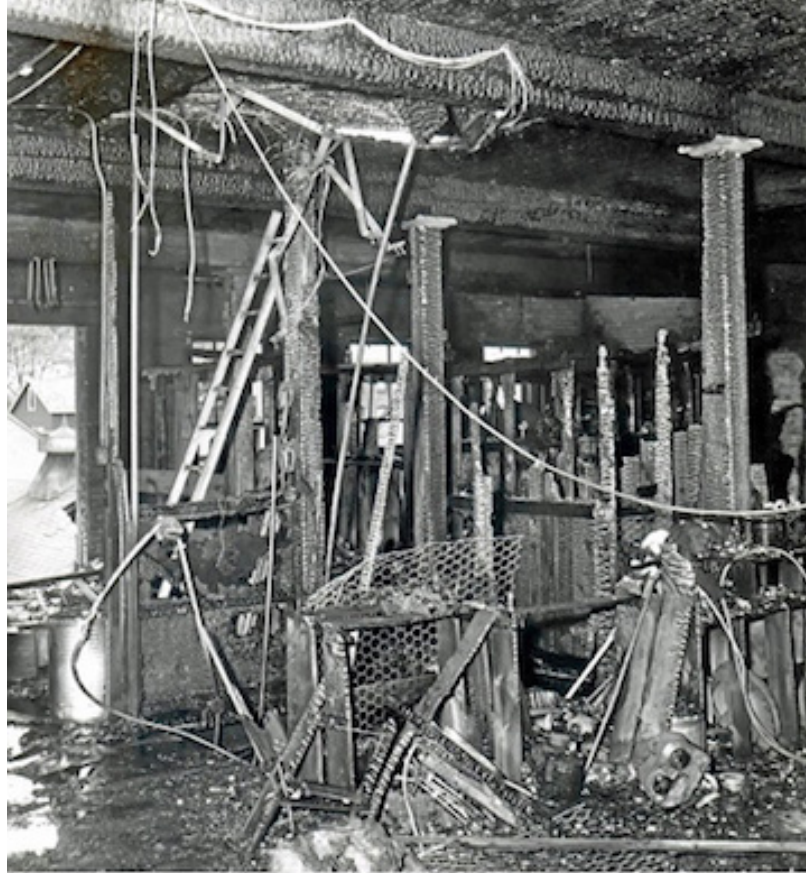
The Bidwell Co. purchased the Main St. property, which was owned by A. W. Converse, in 1911, and built the "Bidwell block" in 1913. Two wooden buildings on the site were torn down and a three-story structure was erected. The new building housed the hardware and farm implements departments of the Bidwell Co. until the hardware department was moved to the old lumber yard building on upper Main St in 1959. The farm machinery department was eliminated in 1959. The assets of the Bidwell Co. were liquidated in 1960, when the business on upper Main St was sold to a Springfield lumber company which continued to operate it. (Springfield Republican, Oct. 7, 1961)

There was a very interesting short article in the Nov. 26, 1911 issue of the Springfield Republican, which talked about the concrete sidewalk that had been installed in front of the Bidwell block. It said: "Now that the season of mud, slush, snow and generally bad walking has returned, the need of sidewalks is forcibly brought to mind. Main Street, the business thoroughfare of Windsor Locks, is sadly lacking in this particular. The excellent concrete sidewalk which has recently been laid in front of the new Bidwell block forcibly brings to mind the desirability of moving from one end of the town to the other without accumulating an excess quantity of mud upon the shoes." That is a great article for reminding us that when reading history, we tend to think that things were then like they are now! Now, we take sidewalks for granted.

It is interesting that Mr. Bidwell bought the land for the Bidwell block from A. W. Converse. Then Mr. Converse's Savings Bank moved into the Bidwell block when it opened. The next year, Mr. Converse shot himself, and it was found that he had stolen \$185,000 from the Savings Bank. Many problems ensued. One of them was that the Savings Bank failed to pay its rent to Mr. Bidwell. Mr. Bidwell sued, and collected. Not all who were owed money by the failed Savings Bank fared as well.

There was a fire in the Bidwell block in 1960. This fire was reported by a telephone operator in the Telephone Company building on Spring St. at about 3AM. She said that she saw the building hit by a bolt of lightning. Two firemen were hurt while battling the blaze. The newspaper clipping describes the fire. The photo shows the aftermath of the fire in one of the upper rooms of the building.

In 1961, Mr. Henry Graziani bought the Bidwell block. Mr. Graziano Graziani later bought the Burnap block, which was then called "Central Hall," and turned it into an A&P. Graziano Graziani also bought the Pease block. The Graziani family and business became a major force in the town of Windsor Locks.



Bidwell Block fire, 1960

The Rialto (Viola-Alfano) Block

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was the brainchild of Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. We know from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks that Leo Viola had a confectionary store in the Barrett block in 1913. Dominick Alfano had a confectionary store in the same location prior to Leo Viola. According to the October 25, 1922 issue of the Springfield Daily News, they built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people, a stage with an asbestos curtain, a fireproof projection room, concrete floors and stairways, and it was all built to the latest safety standards. It also had two stores it could rent out on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance. At one point, Swede's Jewelers was in one of the stores and the optometrist, Dr. Gottesman was in the other. So it was a true multi-purpose building. Below is a photo of the Rialto Theater.

The stage was used for putting on plays and musicals. It was often used for high school plays. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for school graduations. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came and did war bond rallies at the Rialto.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

According to the October 20, 1929 issue of the Springfield Republican, there were two movie theaters in Windsor Locks. The other was the Palace theater on the North side of Grove St., near Main St. The owners of the Rialto, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, bought the Palace theater and closed it down. That was in 1927. The reason was that the competition was making it unprofitable for both theaters. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold Lavigne of Thompsonville, who made some changes to the building and turned it into a bowling alley.

In the December 16, 1930 edition of the Springfield Republican, it was reported that there was a hunting accident, and one of the owners, Leo Viola, was shot accidentally by his hunting partner, Joseph Gatti, who was also his nephew. Mr. Viola died quickly. The coroner was summoned, and he declared it an accidental shooting. Mr. Viola had immigrated here from Italy. He was unmarried. He had become a successful businessman.

In 1939, a major renovation of the interior of the theater was done. They installed new spring cushion seats, the latest sound reproduction system and extra thick carpeting in the lobby and aisles to reduce noise, a modern heating system, a complete lighting system, and the walls were modified to decrease unwanted sounds. (Springfield Republican, June 10, 1939)

The Springfield Union of January 9, 1954, said that the Postmaster, John L. Quagliaroli, is having a new Post Office building built on his property on upper Main St., opposite Leach's coal yard, and it will be ready for occupancy in April. Mrs. Quagliaroli, the wife of the Postmaster, will lease the new building to the Post Office on a long term

lease. The Windsor Locks Post Office had been in the Rialto Theater from 1924 to 1954 (Springfield Union, Nov. 2, 1954).

The March 11, 1967 Springfield Republican said that the theater was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. The theater shut down for a while to fix the cornice on top of the three story structure.

Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. (Springfield Union, July 19, 1973)

Natale Tambussi died in January of 1986 at the age of 77. He started in business with the Windsor Locks Bakery, and later the T&T Tavern. He operated the Rialto Theater, the Windsor Locks Machine Co and the Windsor Locks Lumber Co, from 1947 to 1960.

The owners of the Rialto were:

- Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano - from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930.
- We can assume that Dominick Alfano owned at least part of it until it was sold to Mr. Tambussi in 1947.
- Natale Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960.
- After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford.

We know that all of the businesses on Main St. were demolished in the 1970s for the "re-development". We know from advertisements in the Springfield Union, that the theater was still showing movies as late as March 11, 1967. Mickey Danyluk remembers going to movies at the Rialto as late as 1972 or 1973.

The Pease Block

The next block on our trip north on Main St. is the Pease block. It was on the South corner of Oak and Main Streets. Allen Pease was the son of Wells and Betsy Pease of Enfield. As a young man, he went to Poquonock, where he was a clerk in the Hathaway store. He came to Windsor Locks in 1878, and with his brother, Alvah, and started a tinning and hardware store. Later he added furniture. When his brother died, he took over the business. Still later, when his three sons came into the business, he incorporated as the Allen Pease company. (Springfield Republican, June 14, 1930)

The Pease block was built in 1873. The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks listed the Allen Pease Co. as selling house furnishings, plumbing and hot water heating. Actually it sold far more than that. A look at some receipts from that store showed that they had a massive array of items for sale including: household furniture, carpets, oil cloths, beds, bedding, crockery, glass, windows, tin and silver plated wares, lamps, stoves, furnaces, pumps, lead pipe and sewer pipe. The September 19, 1893 issue of the Springfield Republican said that the carpenters just finished work on the Pease block, and Mr. Pease will have his stock of furniture in place quickly. The showroom is 40 feet by 90 feet and "is finished with natural woods and is lighted with 20 incandescent lights." This tells us the time when the Pease block was started, and what a modern furniture store looked like in 1893.

The following photo is the best picture of the early Pease block that was available. We know that the Rialto Theater is on the South side of the Pease block, which is on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Starting at the left of the photo and moving to the right, there is the Pease block, Oak St, the Burnap Block, the Charter Oak Hotel, and Moran block, which later became the Goldfarb block which housed the Bianchi Restaurant and Shonty's Bar and Grill. The Pease block is the one at the far left with a porch sticking out on the second floor. You can see one chimney on the roof.

The second photo, which was taken in 1954, shows the Modern Drug store where the Pease block once stood.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
Connolly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
Charter Oak Hotel -center with Mansard roof & one chimney
Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
(Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*



Allen Pease Co , founded in 1873 South corner of Oak and Main. Here the location has the "Modern Drug" sign. Mr. Graziani leased the building to Morris Kamin and it became Kamin's Department Store (1954)

As were the other blocks, the Pease block was a multi-purpose building which rented out stores, offices and meeting rooms to other groups. One of the first to rent space in the Pease block was a bicycle club known as the "Wheel Club". According to the October 4, 1894 issue of the Springfield Republican, the Wheel Club was renting space in the Pease Block and they decided to stay there. A partition between the pool room and the card room will be torn down to make room for a billiard table.

Below is a receipt from the Allen Pease Co to Fred S. Bidwell:

PAGE 233

THE ALLEN PEASE CO.
MANUFACTURERS OF AND DEALERS IN

STEAM & HOT WATER HEATING
HOT AIR FURNACES
PLUMBING
TIN HOOFING
GENERAL JOBBING

FURNITURE STOVES CARPETS
TINWARE CHICKERY GLASSWARE
HOUSEFURNISHING GOODS ETC.

INTEREST ADDED
AFTER SIXTY DAYS

Windsor Locks, Conn. Aug 1 1894

Sold to F. S. Bidwell & Co.

July 2 To 1 Duck Pan	25	
25 Work & setting Pipe	20	
Cutting 3 1/2 Pipe	20	65

In 1894, the Military band gave a concert in their new bandstand, which was on the balcony, in front of the Wheel Club. (Springfield Republican, June 17, 1894) In 1901, a "dairy lunch room" was opened in the Pease block, (Springfield Republican, July 6, 1901.) In 1902, Hammett Seabury, an Architecture and Civil Engineering company was in the Pease block. (Springfield Republican, June 27, 1902)

Mr. Pease, at the age of 84, committed suicide by gas asphyxiation in 1930. He had given no indication of any trouble, and had gone down to the store in the morning as usual. Dr. Joseph A. Coogan, who was the owner of the first block we looked at, came to the house but it was too late to do anything.

The Windsor Locks Journal issue of April 1, 1928, said that the Allen Pease Co observed its 56 years at the same location under the same management. It started by Allan Pease and his brother, but was later replaced by the three story building that was shown above. Surely his sons, Frank and Howard continued the store, but I could not find information as to how long they ran it or who they sold it to. An August 24, 1953 article in the Springfield Union that said that the block was owned by Graziano Graziani and that he had just rented a portion of it to a company called "A. Kamins Department Store". The January 30, 1961 issue of the Springfield Union said that Mr. Frank Spodick, the owner of A. Kamins Department Store had died at his home in West Hartford.

Later, that the street level of that site was occupied by Sid's Modern Drug Store.

The Burnap Block (then Central Hall Block)

A fascinating building existed at the North corner of Oak and Main Streets from 1863 to 1936. It extended from Oak Street to Coly's Hotel. The building went through two owners in that time. From 1865 to 1918, it was owned by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap, and was known as the "Burnap Block". From 1918 to 1938, it was owned by Charles Colli, and was known as the "Central Hall Block". Below is a photo of that three story brick building which had four storefronts on Main Street. The Burnap Block is the brick building with the chimneys on top.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
 Connolly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
 Charter Oak Hotel -center with Mansard roof & one chimney
 Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
 (Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*

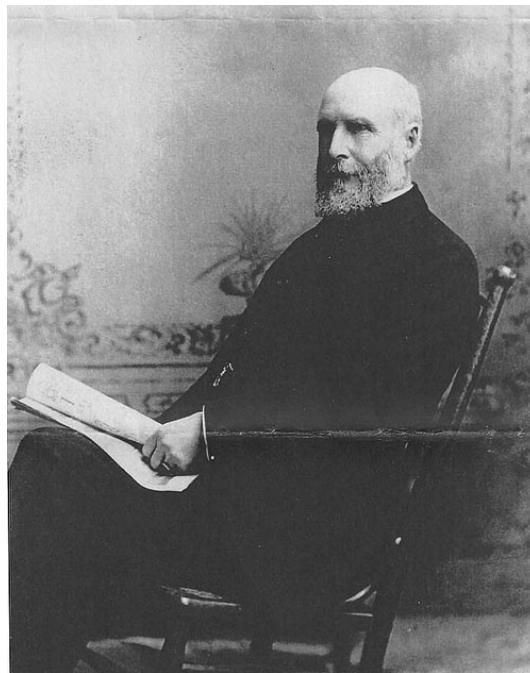
What made that building so fascinating? The answer is that it was the center of Windsor Locks social life, sporting events, and business. It housed a large room whose floor was built over steel springs, which were installed to enhance the experience of dancing. It was known as one of the best dance halls in the area. That same room was also used for operas, movies, theatrical shows, musicals, large meetings, basketball games and boxing matches. When this building was the Burnap Block, this room was called "The Burnap Opera House". When the building changed hands, that room became known as "Central Hall".

Here is a brief history of this building:

- Built in 1863 by Fred Abbe.
- Bought in about 1865 by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap of Windsor Locks, and known during his ownership as the Burnap Block.
- Bought by Charles Colli in 1918 and known as the Central Hall Block during his ownership.
- Bought by Graziano Graziani in 1938, and torn down to make a one story building which housed the A&P.
- The A&P shut down in the late 1960s, when the Windsor Locks government forcibly bought all of the shops on Main St for it's "re-development" program. Under that program, the building was demolished in the 1970s.

Dr. Sidney R. Burnap was born in 1833 and he died in 1901. He was married to Clara A. Converse Burnap (1842 - 1938). They had two daughters, Mary Converse Burnap (1869 - 1947), and Clara Annie Burnap. He was both a physician and a financier.

He and his family lived in a very large house on Maple Street, which was nicknamed "The Castle". When the Burnap family sold their estate, the land was subdivided and put up for auction. According to Mickey Danyluk, a fire in a barn at the Burnap estate was the impetus for Windsor Locks to form a Fire Department. One can assume that Dr. Burnap had a good deal of influence with the town government. Dr. Burnap died on Sept. 3, 1901, at the age of 68. Below is a portrait of Dr. Burnap. The information in this section of this article is taken from "Burnap Hall / Central Hall Block" (Chapter 17 of this book.)



Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap (1833-1901)

The Burnap block was a large building which housed large companies such as the Telephone company and the Telegraph company, and also the Windsor Locks Journal. (Springfield Republican, Jan. 1, 1898) It also contained many small stores such as T. F. Carroll's millenary shop (Springfield Republican, March 3, 1887), W. A. Dwight's jewelry store (Springfield Republican, Dec. 4, 1876), and James D. Outerson's mens furnishings shop. (Springfield Republican, July 10, 1904) Outerson was the Windsor Locks Town Clerk, and he used his store as the Town Clerk's office. He kept all of the town's records in that shop. Later, when he built his own block, he moved the Town Clerk's office to that building, as we saw in an earlier section of this article. Interestingly enough, the Burnap block also had a Polish rooming house (Springfield Republican, August 21, 1913)

The most surprising and interesting feature of the Burnap block was the "Burnap Opera House". It was a large room on the top level which had a stage for plays,

musicals and operas. This room was a multi purpose room, and was used for large meetings. This room was a center of cultural, social, business and political life in Windsor Locks.

In the above section on the Rialto Theater, we saw that in 1929, there was another movie theater, the Palace Theater, which was on lower Grove St. It was in competition with the Rialto. To end the competition between the two theaters, the owners of the Rialto bought the building that the Palace Theater was in and shut down its movie business. They sold the building to another businessman who turned the building into a bowling alley.

This was not the first time that two movie theaters in Windsor Locks were in competition. According to the Springfield Republican of Jan. 14, 1914, a similar thing happened previously. It said that movie theater in the Burnap block was in competition with another theater called the Princess Theater. It turns out that the theater that was called the Palace Theater was previously called the Princess Theater. A deal was cut between the Burnap Opera House and the Princess Theater. The deal let the Princess Theater be the only place in town to show movies, and the Burnap Opera Houses stopped showing movies.

Dr. Sidney Burnap died in 1901. The building stayed in the estate of Dr. Burnap until it was sold to Charles Colli in 1918. Under his ownership, the building was known as the "Central Hall block".

After 1916, no more newspaper articles could be found which referred to the Burnap Block. From 1922 to 1934, the Springfield newspapers had 122 articles which referred to "Central Hall". Those 122 articles are highly repetitive. Most of the articles held basketball scores or the results of boxing matches. The main change in the use of this building after Mr. Colli bought it, was that the large hall that used to be known as "Burnap's Opera House" became known as Central Hall. It was still a multi-purpose room, used for plays, musicals, meetings, etc, but it became widely used for sports, especially basketball and boxing. Two of the Marconi brothers of Windsor Locks, Angelo and Johnny, often were in boxing matches in this hall. (Springfield Republican, Jan. 20, 1929)

In 1938, Charles Colli sold the Central Hall Block to Graziano Graziani, who razed the building and replaced it with a single story building which extended from Coly's Hotel to Oak Street. It had two storefronts. The largest store was the A&P supermarket. The smaller store, which was on the corner of Oak and Main Streets, was at one time, a Western Auto store which was owned by Don LaRussa, who later turned it into the original "D.F.LaRussa's" appliance store. That pair of storefronts didn't change much until the mid-1970s when all the stores along Main St were razed for the process called "Re-Development". Below is a photo of The A&P and the corner store before re-development.



Corner of Oak and Main. Don LaRussa's Appliance store, and the A&P. LaRussa originally had his Western Auto Store here. Previously the Central Hall Building occupied both spaces

The Colapietro Block

The information in this section of this chapter was taken from "Windsor Locks Hotel on Main St. (Chapter 16). From 1861 to 1969, Windsor Locks had one hotel on Main St. It was right in the center of town, across the street from the Railroad Station. It was there for over a century. It was remodeled in 1913 and it was rebuilt after a fire in 1926. Actually, the Railroad Station was built in 1875, so the hotel preceded it by 14 years. Between 1861 and 1969, five men ran this hotel:

1. **Henry Cutler** - opened the **Charter Oak Hotel** in 1861. He operated and owned it until he died in 1900.
2. **Henry L. Cutler** - was the son of Henry Cutler. He took over ownership and management of the Charter Oak Hotel when his father died.
3. **John J. Byrnes** - bought the hotel from Henry L. Cutler in 1913. He changed the name to the **Byrnes Hotel**.
4. **Harry A. Brusie** - leased the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1914, and changed the name to the **Brusie Hotel**.
5. **Vito Colapietro** - bought the hotel from John J. Byrnes in 1916, and changed the name to the **Windsor Locks Hotel**. It was referred to as "Coly's Hotel". "Coly" was an Americanization of the Italian name "Colapietro." The Windsor Locks Hotel burned in 1926, but was rebuilt immediately. It operated until 1969, when it was demolished for re-development.

Below is a photograph of the Charter Oak Hotel.



*Main Street, Windsor Locks, between Oak & Grove Streets.
 Connelly Stables - white overhead sign to right of hotel.
 Charter Oak Hotel - center with Mansard roof & one chimney
 Burnap Building - left of hotel with four chimneys
 (Susan Cutler Quagliaroli Photo)*

A good place to start the history of the Charter Oak Hotel is with a portion of a larger newspaper article from the Springfield Republican of May 11, 1913. See the article below. Henry Cutler saw that a hotel had just been built and leased it from the builder. He founded the Charter Oak Hotel. In 1963, he purchased the hotel from the builder.

The Charter Oak hotel stood for more than 50 years as one of the old historic hostelrys of the Connecticut valley. Rarely is there an instance of a hotel holding a continuous record for active service for such a long space of time, and many a traveling man has a warm spot in his heart for it. In 1861 Henry Cutler, the first hotel man of Windsor Locks, leased the property from the builder and started conducting a small hotel under the name of the Charter Oak hotel. For a little over a year the hotel was run under this lease, and then, in 1863, the property was bought outright and the proprietor entered into the hotel business in real earnest. In 1900 Mr. Cutler died, and his son, Henry L. Cutler, succeeded him as proprietor and manager of the hotel. Mr

*Springfield Republican
 May 11, 1913*

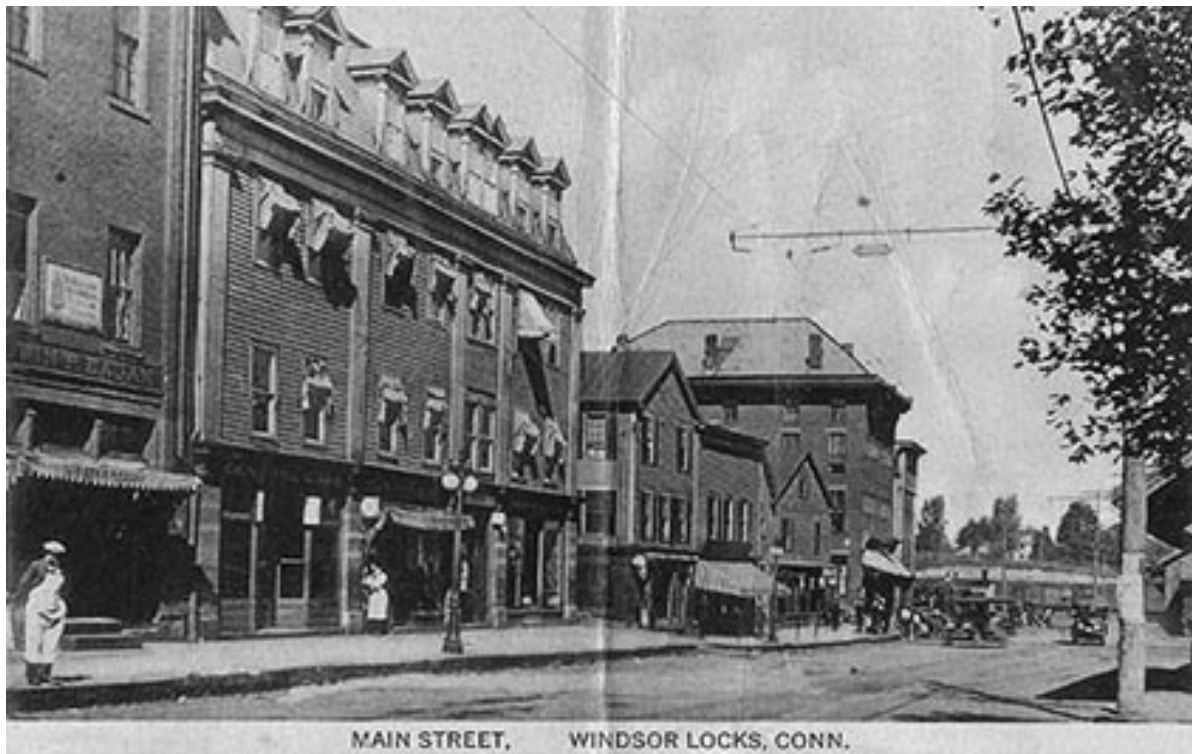
In 1900, Henry Cutler, the owner and proprietor of the Charter Oak Hotel, died. Here is an obituary in an undated and unnamed newspaper that was provided by a member of the Cutler family. Other sources do confirm that he died in 1900. We see in it that he had already put his son Henry L. Cutler in charge of the hotel before he died.

RECENT DEATHS.

Henry Cutler.

Henry Cutler, aged 81 years, died at his home on Main street, Windsor Locks, Friday evening at 8:30. Mr. Cutler, who was born in Greenwich, Mass., had been a resident of Windsor Locks for many years, going there in 1866, and entering into the hotel business at the Charter Oak House, of which he continued to be proprietor until a few years ago, when it passed into the hands of his son, Henry. Mr. Cutler was a member of the Congregational Church, and was of a quiet and pleasant disposition, which won for him many friends. The body will be taken to Greenwich, Mass., where his wife is buried.

Henry L. Cutler died in Windsor Locks in 1936. He only ran the Charter Oak Hotel for a few years. Mr. Henry L. Cutler sold the hotel to Mr. John J. Byrnes in 1913. Mr. Byrnes did a massive redesign and renovation of the hotel right after he bought it. For example, he added three storefronts on the street level of the hotel. Shortly after he finished the renovation, he leased the hotel to Mr. Harry A. Brusie. However, in 1916, Mr. Byrnes sold the hotel to Vito Colapietro. Below is a photo of the hotel at about the time when Mr. Colapietro bought the store. You can see the storefronts at the street level.



***The Hotel on Main St. across from the Railroad Station
prior to the 1926 fire and re-building
but after 1913 remodelling which made three stores at street level.***

Mr. Colapietro ran the hotel and also had a confectionary store on the street level. In 1926, when he was doing a major renovation on the hotel, and there was a fire. A great deal of damage was done but it was not completely gutted. He completed the renovation, which increased the size of the hotel, and added in an apartment on the first floor for his family to live in. He replaced the Mansard roof and the facade was entirely done in stucco. He and his wife raised their five children there, and the hotel thrived, along with the businesses on the street floor. Mr. Colapietro always had one of the three stores. The other stores turned over a number of times. In the 1950s and 60s, one of the stores was Mr. Mondo Bianchi's shoe store, and the other was Bill Amstead's Package Store.

Below is a photo of the hotel after Mr. Colapietro's renovation. Mr. Colapietro owned and operated the hotel until the late 1960s when the Windsor Locks government decided to redevelop Main St, and bought up and razed all of buildings there, including the hotel.



*1927 advertising photo of Windsor Locks Hotel,
After the 1926 fire and the 1927 reconstruction*

The Moran Block

John Moran was born in Suffield in about 1821. He lived in Hartford, and in New York for a while. He returned to Windsor Locks in the days of stagecoaches. He leased the Yellow Tavern and ran it as a coach house. (Springfield Republican, May 1, 1898) In 1854, he was working for the American Hotel in Warehouse Point (Hartford Times, July 15, 1854) In that article, we see that he provided dinner for about 300 people from Windsor Locks in celebrating the Fourth of July. The May 1, 1898 article said that he worked for the Charter Oak Hotel in Windsor Locks for a while. It also said that after being with the Charter Oak Hotel, he had a general store and a saloon. Below is an early photo of the Moran block from about the turn of the century.



Pease block **Burnap block**

Charter Oak Hotel

Moran block

The Springfield Republican issue of April 17, 1874, said that Robert McConan bought John Moran's Main Street block for about \$15,000. The Dec. 3, 1874 issue of the Springfield Republican said that T. E. Carroll bought the John Moran block from Robert McGowan. NOTE: Obviously, there is a discrepancy between the two newspaper articles on the name of the man who owned the block before Mr. Carroll. In the first article, his name is "McConan". In the second, it is "McGowan." One of Mr. Carroll's daughters married a Robert McCowan. That might be a clue as to the correct spelling of that name.

There about a dozen newspaper references to Mr. T. F. Carroll between 1870 and 1886, but most of them were advertisements in which Mr. Carroll was looking for millinery and dress makers for his store in the Burnap block, or advertisements for space he had for rent.

Mr. Carroll died in 1886. The next newspaper reference to this block was in 1922, when it was owned by Mr. Moses Goldfarb. The first reference was that Mr. Goldfarb's clothing store was robbed in 1922 (Springfield Republican, May 31, 1922). On the upper floor of Mr. Goldfarb's block were apartments that he rented. In the early days, Mr. Goldfarb had a clothing business on the first floor. Later he rented space to Bianchi's Restaurant, and Shonty's Bar and Grill. There was once a Chinese laundry in the upper floor.

Below is a photo of the Goldfarb block taken in 1925, followed by a photo of Vito Colapietro and Moses Goldfarb taken in 1932, in which you can see both the hotel and Mr Goldfarb's block. Mr. Goldfarb's block is on the right.



MAIN STREET,

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

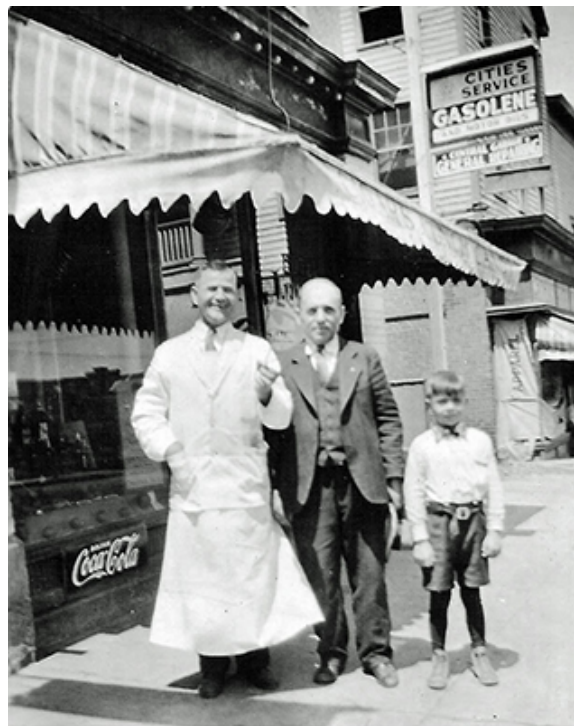
Photo taken in 1925

**Central
Hall
block**

Coly's Hotel

**Goldfarb
block, was
Moran block**

**Bee Hive
building with
Mansard roof,
3 chimneys**



**Moses Golfarb, between Vito and
Leo Colapietro. 1932. Rooming
House has open window**

The next photo shows both Coly's Hotel and Mr. Goldfarb's block after the town bought the properties for destruction in the late 1960s. Everything had been closed. This was sad to see, especially for businessmen who had been there for half a century.



Windsor Locks Hotel, after being sold to the town for Main St. redevelopment. Shut down-1969. Torn down-1971, Replaced by a CVS & a Dunkin Donut

The Beehive Block (The Shea Block)

The "Beehive Building" was the nickname of a large apartment house at the North corner of Grove and Main Streets. The nickname did not refer to the looks of the building, but to the fact that it was made of many small apartments, with many people and much action in the hallways. In other words, it was always buzzing with action. It was owned by an Irishman named Patrick Shea. In the Springfield newspapers, there were four articles published between 1895 and 1907, which referred to the "Shea block". Further information on Mr. Shea can be found in Chapter 14. The Feb. 22, 1895 issue of the Springfield Republican says that Mr. George N. Kent opened a meat market in January but it could not meet expenses, so he had to turn over the store's fixtures to Mr. H. L. Handy to settle his bill. The April 10, 1898 issue of the same newspaper

described a knife fight between two Italians. One of the men was slightly injured. The other was taken away by the Police. The August 26, 1898 issue of that paper described a "free for all" fight that took place at an Italian christening party after midnight. Several people were severely pummeled. The August 18, 1907 issue of that newspaper said that a fire broke out in the meat market of Pauline Bottasso on the ground floor of the Shea Block.

Between 1895 and 1913, there were two more references in the Springfield Republican to Joseph Bottasso's meat market. All of the references to the Shea Block and to the Bottasso meat market mentioned Italians. That gives the idea that the inhabitants of the large apartment house were primarily of Italian descent. Mr. Bottasso died on Dec. 21, 1956. He had been a resident of Windsor Locks for 58 years. He was born in Italy on Dec. 27, 1876. He came to the US in 1898.

The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later this location had Red Leary's store on it, as well as the Mayflower Restaurant, Mac's Package Store and Ray's Lunch. Over the years, those stores changed hands a number of times. When it was the Beehive building, it truly was a multi purpose building, with stores on the street floor, and apartments to rent on the upper floors. Below is a photo which includes the Beehive block.



MAIN STREET,

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Photo taken in 1925

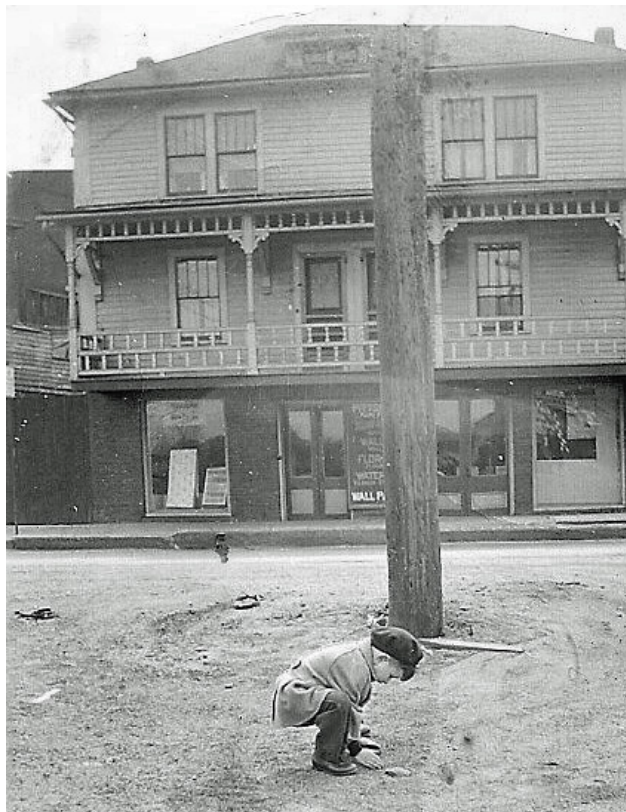
Edwin P. Eagan

Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.

Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor

The Tate Block

Mr. Everett B. Tate was a professional photographer who owned the northernmost block on our list. In it, he had his photography studio, a paint store and a wall paper store as well as apartments for rent. Mr. Tate's family also lived in the building. According to the May 10, 1987 issue of the Springfield Union, Mr. Tate died at the age of 79. That would put the year of his birth at 1908. The structure burned in the 1920s and was restored with a new roof line and new windows. The structure which existed after the fire is shown in the photo below. Very little information could be found about Mr. Tate.



Larry Ferrari in front of Tate House. Main St. Windsor Locks. Mr Tate was a photographer.

The Mooney Block

John E. Mooney was born in Suffield on January 17, 1854. He came to Windsor Locks with his parents when he was a child and he spent his life in this town. While still a boy, he went to work in the mills along the canal. Later, he learned the tinning trade from Mr. C. E. Chaffee in the shop owned by Allen Pease. While working in the Seymour paper mill in 1887, he went into business for himself. He opened a tin shop on Grove St. In 1898, he moved his business to his new block at the corner of Oak and Center streets.

In 1897, John E. Mooney decided to build the Mooney block on the corner of Oak and Center Streets. That was a big decision for a young man. The Nov. 14, 1897 issue of the Springfield Republican, which is shown below, is a wonderful description as to why the newspaper writer thought the move was a great idea. It has to do with problems of parking your horse and buggy on Main St., and it says that things will be even worse when the Street railway comes through. Mooney had been in his shop on the corner of Grove and Main Streets since 1898.

John E. Mooney has had the courage to abandon Main street as his place of business, and has broken ground for a store building at the corner of Center and Oak streets. It would be a good idea if more of the business men would follow his example, for Main street is altogether too crowded. It is a one-sided street, with the business houses on one side and the canal on the other. When the country people come in with their teams, which they hitch along the west side of the street, it makes altogether too much of a blockade. If the street railway ever gets through, it will be still worse, for some day some unsophisticated horse from the country, which has never seen any vehicle more modern than a plow, will take fright at the cars and tear down Main street, running into half the teams that are tied along the street, and ending up by taking a little swim in the canal to cool off.

Springfield Republican, Nov 14, 1897

According to Mickey Danyluk, the formal opening of Mooney's block was on May 4, 1898. A band concert was held in the afternoon and there was dancing in the evening. The building was a three story structure which was 35 feet by 80 feet, with a stock and tin room on the second floor and a hall on the third floor. The Windsor Locks Journal reported "...it is a credible addition to the town's business places." Below is a photo of the original Mooney block and his house, which is beside his block. While it is difficult to see, Mr. Mooney is standing on the front porch of his house in this photo.



*Mooney block and John E. Mooney home 1920
Corner of Oak & Center Streets, Windsor Locks, CT*

Below is a receipt from J. E. Mooney.

Windsor Locks, Conn., August 17, 1911. 19

Mr. George M. Wallace,

To J. E. Mooney, Dr.
Furnishing Undertaker,

Office Phone, 5-1. For Burial of Mildred Wallace. Home Phone, 5-2.

1 P. K. Covered, Hinged Top, Silk Lined Casket		
4 Casket Handles		
1 Silver Plate Engraved	30.00	
1 Outside Case	6.00	
Preserving	No Charge	
Candles, Gloves & Chairs	3.00	
Hearse	7.00	
Flower Wagon	5.00	\$51.00

Shortly after moving into his new block, he added the furniture and the undertaking business. He was a staunch Democrat, a member of the board of education, a charter member of the Knights of Columbus, a member of the businessmen's association, and its successor, the Chamber of Commerce, and a trustee of St. Mary's Church. (Springfield Republican, October 31, 1935)

Mooney also ran a kind of a general store business in his block on Oak and Center Streets. The term “general store” is not meant to include food, but to include just about everything that Pease sold in his store, which is almost everything for the house. From 1879, when he opened his new block until his death in 1935, there were a number of newspaper articles describing things that happened at the Mooney block. In his block, he had a large hall that he rented out. The newspapers referred to it as “Mooney Hall”. It was used for dances, for socials, for large meetings, etc.

The 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks said: “Mooney, J. E. Stoves & Ranges, Plumbing & Heating, Funeral Director. Oak & Center Sts.”

Mooney’s block later became Johnson’s Funeral Parlor. The Springfield newspapers have many references to Johnson’s Funeral Home starting in 1936 and going until 1969. Then it became the Kania Funeral home and the newspaper articles refer it from 1970 to 1988. Sometime after that, it became a two story apartment house. Below is a photo of the apartment house.



Originally - Mooney block, Oak & Center Sts. Then Johnson Funeral Home. Later Kania Funeral Home Finally, it became an apartment house.

Conclusions

The term “block” is an archaic word that was used from the early 1900s to the 1950s to denote a large multipurpose business building. For example, a block is a large building which includes some combination of stores, offices, a large meeting room, and apartments for rent. The term was used in reference to fifteen buildings in downtown Windsor Locks, which existed sometime between 1850 and 1970. The term was not specific to Windsor Locks. It was in general usage in the United States in its time.

All fifteen blocks were on Main Street except for one which was two blocks away, at the corner of Center and Oak Streets. Some of the blocks had been built as early as 1860. Others were built as late as the early 1900s. All were owned by people who were important in the business community, and almost all who were actively involved in

political, and social aspects of town life. They were all entrepreneurs. The modern term is “movers and shakers”. Some already had “family money”. Some were immigrants who had not been in the country for more than ten years. The business of owning prime real estate and using it for business purposes was the way to build and increase a fortune. When these buildings were built, there was an air of growing prosperity in Windsor Locks. Mills were operating along the canal, and more mills were being built. The railroad brought increased business potential to the town. Immigrants were flowing into Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks was just beginning to grow, and the outlook was very, very good.

As we saw, there were differences among the fifteen blocks. Dr. Coogan had his office and home in his block as well as other apartments, stores and offices that he rented out. Dr. Burnap lived in a massive home on a hundred acres on Maple St. His Burnap block was probably the biggest block, and it housed large companies such as the telephone and telegraph companies, and the Windsor Locks Journal. It also had the Burnap Opera House, which was the center of high society in Windsor Locks. One of the blocks was a big movie theater with offices and stores for rent. One was the only hotel on Main St. Most of the blocks had multi purpose Halls. Many had rooms, offices and stores to rent or lease. One had mortuary as well as a hardware business. One housed the Town Clerk’s office.

Things were happening in the 1950s and 60s that had an effect on Main St. Almost all of the businesses on Main Street were locally owned and locally operated. That was the way it had been since the first stores were built on Main St, long before the blocks were constructed. But in the 1950s, a change was occurring across the United States. “Mom and Pop” stores were being replaced by the stores of national chains of stores. It happened with grocery stores, pizza parlors, hotels, ice cream stores, hardware stores, and more. While few of these chain stores existed on Main St, they were appearing on Turnpike Road, near Bradley Field. Of course, downtown Windsor Locks had an A&P, which was part of a chain.

As decades passed, technology changed, which changed the business outlook in Windsor Locks. New ways of manufacturing and cheaper labor abroad caused the mills to slowly shut down. By 1970, only two of the mills remained, and one was on its last leg. The influx of immigrants slowed in the 1920s, and eventually stopped.

The other side of Main St. stayed healthy much longer than did the mills along the canal. The blocks and the businesses were still going strong in the 1950s. The downtown businesses did have their share of fires. Those buildings were mostly constructed of wood.

In this paper, we have studied the blocks, their functions, their changes, their differences, and their owners. We have reviewed some of the technological, sociological, and business changes that affected the blocks of Windsor Locks. In the 1960s and 70s, the town of Windsor Locks found the money and the political will to “re-develop” Main St. The downtown business area had deteriorated. The town of Windsor Locks received some Federal money to redevelop Main Street. In the 1960s, the town bought up all of the buildings in the business district of Main Street. That included all of the blocks except the one on the corner of Oak and Center Streets. In the 1970s, all of those structures were razed. The era of the blocks is gone and it will not return.

Chapter 33

The Rise and Fall of the Windsor Locks Canal and the Factories Along the Canal

Organization of this article

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) The Earliest Mills Near the River**
- 3) Factors Leading to the Building of the Canal**
- 4) Factories Built Near the Canal from 1829 to 1844, before the railroad went through Windsor Locks**
- 5) The Railroad Comes to Windsor Locks in 1844**
- 6) The Complete List of Companies Along The Canal**
- 7) How the Number of Factories Changed Over Time**
- 8) Photos & Descriptions of the 12 Factories Operating in 1909**
- 9) Some Factories Converted to Tobacco Business in the 1900s**
- 10) Conclusions and Lessons Learned**
- 11) Sources for This Article**

1) Introduction

The rise and fall of the Windsor Locks canal and the factories along the canal is a fascinating story. This article covers:

- the history of the canal and the factories along it,
- the factors which caused their initiation,
- the factors which caused their rise and their fall,
- the resulting effects on the town of Windsor Locks.

While the official name of the canal is the Enfield Falls Canal, the people of Windsor Locks have always referred to it as the Windsor Locks Canal.

The history of the canal and the factories can be summarized as follows:
In the early 1700s, there were no factories or mills in the area now known as Windsor Locks. In the middle of the 1700s, mills began to appear along Kettle Brook, near the

river, which was part of the Pine Meadow section of Windsor, Conn. In 1829, the canal was built through Windsor Locks to provide for the transportation of goods and people, and to provide water power for factories. It worked. Factories and mills and factories grew up along the canal. In 1845, a railroad was built along the canal which changed how the canal was used. The Railroad took over the role of transporting goods and people. The factories and mills continue to thrive, because of water power from the canal. However, in the 1900s, and especially after 1950, the number of factories declined, as electricity replaced water power and as American manufacturing switched to services. By 1990, there was only one factory left, and the canal was no longer functional.

There is a larger context in which to view the history of the canal and its factories. There were two sides to Main Street. On the river side, there was the canal and the factories along it. On the other side of Main Street was a long strip of retail stores. Together, these two sides constituted the financial and social engine of the town for about a century, from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. While it might be difficult for the young people of Windsor Locks to visualize it now (2017), life in Windsor Locks centered on Main Street during that century. Then, Windsor Locks was hit by a double-whammy. By 1980, all but two of the factories were empty, and the entire strip of retail stores along Main Street disappeared in what was meant to be a “re-development” of Main Street. Unfortunately, the expected return of retail stores to replace the demolished ones never occurred. As a result, Main Street went, in a short period of time, from being the vibrant center of the town which provided jobs on one side of the street and shopping on the other, to a long quiet street with neither. The following two photos show the difference. This is mentioned here only to provide context for the topic at hand, which is the canal and the factories along it.

The twists and turns that nature and fate took with regard to the canal and the factories could never have been predicted. As we shall see, some of them are counter-intuitive. Now, let’s take a look at the history of the canal and the factories.



Main Street in the 1960s



Main Street in the 1980s

2) The Earliest Mills near the River

The mills along the canal were built after the canal was built. However there were mills very close to that area in 1741. There was a water-powered mill in that area in 1784. The canal wasn't built until 1829, and the first mill to make use of the canal was not built until 1931. These mills were in the Pine Meadow section of the town of Windsor. The best description of life in that area at that time was by Jabez Haskell Hayden (1886). Here is his description of those first mills. The information in the rest of this section is also taken from that article.

According to Jabez H. Hayden (1886):

Water-power was first used to run a saw-mill on Kettle Brook, which was being built, or rebuilt, by the Denslow family in 1742; at that date, half of it was sold to Daniel Hayden, and afterward the other half was sold to his brother, Isaac Hayden. About twenty years later, Daniel Hayden had failed, and in 1769 it passed into the hands of Haskell & Dexter, whose families operated it jointly three quarters of a century, when the Dexter family became sole owners, and they still (1886) continue it in operation. As early as 1781 a small grist-mill was set up on Pine Meadow Brook, a mile and a half from the present village, by Ensign Eliakim Gaylord and Elijah Higley. It passed into the hands of Jacob Russell, who continued it about thirty years. The mill was afterward used for wool-carding, and later had several other transformations. The site is now (1886) occupied by William English's paper-mill.

In 1784 Haskell & Dexter built a grist-mill below their saw-mill, and it was kept in operation until the building of the canal destroyed the water-power. They also built, in 1819, the grist-mill which is still (in 1886) conducted by the Dexter family. In 1811 Herlehigh and Harris Haskell (who were born and spent their lives here) built a gin-distillery on the site of the present silk mill. The enterprise was hailed as a great boon to all the neighboring towns, because it made a market for their rye and corn. The business was successfully prosecuted until 1833.

In 1770, Mr. Seth Dexter built a mill for "cloth-dressing" of wool on the site of Mr. C. W. Holbrook's mill on Kettle Brook. He brought the technology to do this from Massachusetts. This mill, which was called "Dexter's Clothier Works" was in operation for about 60 years (1770-1830). Mr. Dexter trained a number of men to set up and run such mills.

Haskell and Dexter built a grist mill in 1784 (as discussed above). In 1819, they built a second grist mill near the old saw mill. That second grist mill is shown in a 1910 photo below. We shall see later in this article that it was in the basement of this

building that Charles Dexter developed a method of manufacturing paper. The dirt road in front of the mill is Main Street. The grist mill was torn down in 1925, and paper became the source of the Dexter family fortune. This mill was across from the Congregational church.



Haskell & Dexter grist mill, built in 1819. 1910 photo.

3) Factors Leading to the Building of the Canal

Now that we have seen that mills, including water-powered mills, existed near the river from around 1770 to when the canal was built in 1829, let's look at some things that were happening to cause the canal to be built.

We start with Mr. William Pynchon, who was one of New England's first settlers, and probably the best businessmen among the early settlers. He was looking for a strategic place to found a settlement along the Connecticut River. He wanted a place with good soil for farming and also a place which was strategically located for the transportation of commercial goods. He discovered such a location that hadn't yet been settled yet. It was the area we now know as Springfield. The land he found was just

north of the Connecticut River's first large falls - Enfield Falls. This was as far north as seagoing ships could go. By founding Springfield where he did, Connecticut River traffic would either begin, end, or have to cross his settlement. Mr. Pynchon was a very savvy, forward thinking businessman. (William Pynchon, Wikipedia)

In 1636, Mr. Pynchon sent supplies from Boston, up the Connecticut River. However, his vessels could go no farther than the foot of the Enfield Falls. He then provided land transportation for the 14 mile trip to Springfield. He built a warehouse on the East side of the river at the highest practicable point his vessels could reach, to store his goods while awaiting transit. He called the landing-place **Warehouse Point**. (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

In the 1820s, flat-bottomed boats on the Connecticut River could be taken over the falls by using local "fallsmen" who moved the boat forward by using long poles. One man was required for each ton of cargo. Not only did the added labor costs make this method of overtaking the falls expensive, but the cargo could not weigh more than ten tons. Any additional freight had to be offloaded at Warehouse Point and warehoused for later transport or carried around the falls by ox teams. (Enfield Falls Canal)

Mr. Pynchon started shipping goods as far as Springfield, even though it was very difficult and costly. Businessmen wanted something to be done to make shipping past Enfield Falls much cheaper and easier.

In 1824, the Connecticut River Company was chartered with improving the navigability of the river by removing sandbars and building canals. It focussed on building the Enfield Falls Canal. It was found that the West side of the river was the best for making a canal. The people behind this were mostly businessmen from Hartford who wanted to increase their trade with towns that were "up-river," that is, toward Massachusetts. Though the improvement of navigation was the primary object, the backers of the work also considered waterpower to be important. (Jabez Hayden, 1886)

Construction of the canal began in 1827, and it was opened on November 11, 1829. The canal was 5 1/4 miles (8.4 km) long and had a vertical drop of 32 feet (9.8 m). The locks admitted craft up to 90 feet (27 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) wide. The businessmen who had the canal built, fully intended to profit from

- 1) the tolls charged on canal traffic,
 - 2) the sale of mill sites,
 - 3) the leasing of water rights to mill operators along the last mile of the canal bank.
- (Enfield Falls Canal)

The canal was finished in 1829. Around the locks of the canal, in Pine Meadow, a new settlement formed, and in 1854, it was incorporated as Windsor Locks. The new canal brought commerce and good fortune to Windsor Locks. Boat traffic, both for goods and for passengers increased immediately. The number of factories along the canal bank increased. When there is the potential for monetary gain, businessmen will come and invest. The canal provided the reason.

4) Factories built near the Canal from 1829 to 1844 Before the Railroad went through Windsor Locks

Jabez Haskel Hayden's 1886 article provides an excellent list of the factories built from the time the canal was completed until the railroad was built through Windsor Locks in 1844. The start and end dates for these factories are provided.

1831 - 1834 - **Jonathan Danforth's mill** built door butts (hinges),

1835 - 1837 - **Samuel Williams paper-mill.**

1836 **Carleton and Niles saw-mill**, which became a **paper mill**

About 1836 **Charles Haskell Dexter** began making wrapping-paper in a basement room of the grist-mill, his water-power being supplied by Kettle Brook.

1838 - **Haskel & Hayden silk mill**

1839 - 1957 - **Royal Prouty's wire drawing mill.**

1839 - 1842 - James H. and John F. **Wells paper mill**,

1844 - H. A. **Converse iron foundry**, went to his son, A. W. Converse, upon his death.

1844 - **Slate & Brown** built cotton machinery. During the Civil war their mill was used as an armory by Denslow & Chase, and many hands were employed making guns. That completes the list of factories listed by Jabez Haskel Hayden that were built between the time the canal was built in 1829 and the railroad was built through Windsor Locks in 1844.

5) The Railroad comes to Windsor Locks in 1844

As a small town between Springfield and Hartford, Windsor Locks has always needed transportation both for goods and for people. Before 1829, travel was by foot, by horse, or by horse and buggy. The streets were not paved. As we saw, a canal was built in 1829 to circumvent the Enfield Falls in the Connecticut River, and it was immediately successful in transporting people and goods between Hartford and Springfield. Factories were built along the canal to take advantage of both the ability to transport goods, and to use the water power made possible via the canal. In 1844, a railroad was built through Windsor Locks. It immediately replaced the canal for the transportation and both goods and people. However, the canal continued to sustain the economic growth of the town by providing water power for factories built along the canal. Rail traffic steadily increased, and in 1875 the present station was built to provide better service for travelers on the Hartford-Springfield line. Up until World

War II, the station served a steady flow of passengers. The railroad station ceased operation about 1971. Below is a photo of the Railroad Station that was built on Main Street in 1875. Above information from "[Great American \(Railroad\) Stations: Windsor Locks, CT \(WNL\)](#)"

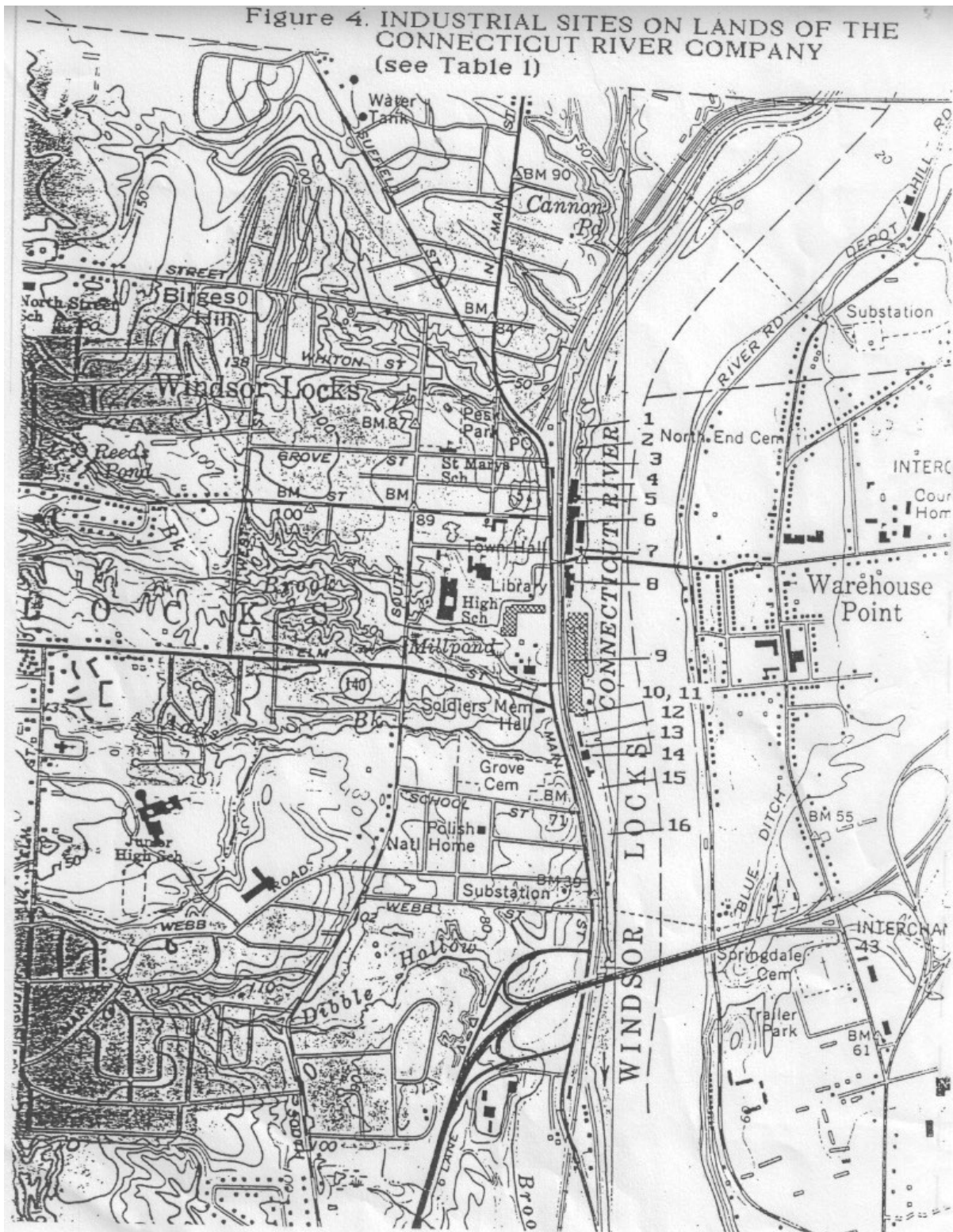


6) The Complete List of Companies Along The Canal

Mark S. Raber and Patrick M. Malone (1991) wrote a detailed report which contains the most complete listing that could be found, of the businesses that owned and operated the mills and factories along the canal from 1929 to 1991. The following map, which is from the Raber and Malone report, shows the location of each of the 16 factory sites. It helps you visualize the information in the chronological list of companies at each site. After presenting the list, we will attempt to characterize the list by developing some summary statistics.

The Raber and Malone report had a large fold-out page which provided information on the 70 companies that operated the mills and factories on the 16 sites. They left out one factory, the Windsor Locks Paper Corp. For purposes of completeness, the list below contains all 17 sites. One has been added for the Windsor Locks Paper Corp. For each of the 17 sites, there is a list of the names of the companies that occupied that site in chronological order. For each company name, the dates they started and ended operation are given, along with the type of product they manufactured. Mergers of different companies are noted, as are moves of a company from one site to another. The letter "c" in front of a date means "circa" = "about". In some cases, information was added to this list which was not in the Raber and Malone report. In every case in which information was added, the name and date of the source is provided.

Figure 4. INDUSTRIAL SITES ON LANDS OF THE
CONNECTICUT RIVER COMPANY
(see Table 1)



**Factories along the canal, listed chronologically by site number.
See map for location of the site numbers.
This information taken from the Raber and Malone (1991) report.**

- Site #1. - A. P. Wilks & Co., sawmill, 1836 - 1840.
 - J. B. Chapman, sawmill, 1840 - 1847.
 - C. B. Huchins & Co., sawmill, 1847 - 1850.
 - James Outerson, paper mill, c1850 - 1855.
 - Converse, Burbank & Co. paper mill, c1856 - 1857.
 - Persse & Brooks, 1857, became part of Site #2.
- Site #2. - Persse & Brooks, Pacific paper mill, 1857 - 1862
 - Semour Paper Co. c1862 - 1898
 - American Writing Paper Co, 1898 - 1930. Operated under its
 Windsor Paper Co. Division. Later the building was demolished.
 According to The Springfield Union of July 13, 1899, The American
 Writing Paper Co bought the Windsor Paper Co.
 - American Writing Paper Co. sold off its Windsor Locks unit on
 Jan. 11, 1937. (Dec 27, 1936 issue of the Boston Herald)
- Site #3. - Glover & Son machine repairs, c1870 - 1880.
 - Windsor Locks Machine Co. manufactured paper making
 machines, c1881 - 1920.
 - Windsor Paper Co. (owned by American Writing Paper Co.),
 c1920, but made part of Site 2.
- Site #4 - H. A. Converse & Co., moved from Site 6b. 1867.
 - A. W. Converse & Co., c1882 - 1890
 - Plant taken over by Eli Horton & Son, c1890 as part of Site #5.
- Site #5 - Eli Horton, worked for Persse & Brooks, made chucks at Site #7,
 c1851 - 1864.
 - Incorporated in 1873.
 - Horton's son-in-law, Ezra Bailey, took over c1878 after he died.
 - Purchased Gabb Manufacturing Co, which made aviation products,
 1949.
 - Sold to Greenfield Tap and Die in 1956 by Conn. International.
 - Conn. International ran Crouse Hinds here until 1981.

Site #6 - Jonathan Danforth, built door-butts, c1835 - 1844 under various owners.
Site divided c1844 - 1864.

Site #6a - Slate & Brown, 1844 - 1850
- Denslow & Beach, machine shop, c1851 - 1855
- F. M. Brown, cotton machinery, c1851 - 1855
- A. G. West, sewing machine maker, c1855 - 1860
- Denslow & Chase, machine shop c1860 - 1864
- probable site of William Muir Army rifle contract 1863-1864
- Dwight, Skinner & Co. sold site to Montgomery Co in 1881, and purchased Seymour Paper Co plant at Site #7. Montgomery made novelty yarns, and used site until 1989. They expanded in 1891-1893, and again in 1904.
(see Site #16 for more info about Montgomery)

Site #6b - J. P. and H. A. Converse foundry, 1844 - 1860
- H. A. Converse foundry in 1851 - 1855 timeframe
- H. A. Converse built new plant at Site 4 in 1864.

Sites #6a and #6b were combined in 1864 under various wool scouring firms, H. R. Coffin & Co, being the earliest.

Site #7 - Samuel Williams & Whiting Hollister paper mill. (Many operator combinations) 1833 - 1844
- Persse & Brooks Anchor mill. 1844 - 1856. Anchor Mill burned in 1856, rebuilt in 1857 as part of Persse & Brooks Paper Works Co. c1857 - 1662
- Semour Paper Co., lower mill. c1862 - 1882.
- Dwight, Skinner & Co., wool scourers, bought plant in 1882, moved from Site #6.
- Anchor Paper Mill Co. bought plant in 1894, made copying, silver, & anti-tarnishing tissue, impression copying books to c1920.
- Montgomery Co. bought and demolished site c1920, and built concrete factory; consolidated all operations at Site #6 and #16.
- Principal site of Montgomery Co. tinsel manufacturing for electric, telephone and radio cords; military braid; drawing and electroplating of tinsel wire after 1925: wire mesh products after c1938, metallic yarns after c1950. It ran until 1989.

- Site #8
- James and John Wells Paper mill, c1839 - 1843. Operated by C. P. Hollister 1843-1847. Mill burned in 1847. Ruins bought by A. & G. Blake for cotton batting plant. Plant sold to L. B. Chapman in 1850. It was run as a stockinet factory by varied tenants of L. B. Chapman 1851-1863.
 - A. C. Medlicott & others began later. Medlicott Co, c1863 - 1950. Made cut stockinet goods c1863 - 1867. Made full fashion knit underwear afterwards. Site rebuilt and enlarged c1863 - 1888.
 - Plant expanded in 1881, 1885, 1888. All operations consolidated here c1888. Operations ended in 1950
- Site #9
- C. H. Dexter manila paper plant began east of canal about 1840, probably with Kettle Brook water.
 - C. H. Dexter and E. A. Douglass enlarged paper mill in 1847. Firm later became the Dexter Corp., with earlier Dexter grist and saw mill.
 - Toilet paper products introduced in 1861-1862, and was made until 1936.
 - Plant burned in 1873. Expanded in 1881.
 - New products from 1886-1895 include: tissues, Bristols, pattern paper, manifold linen. Plant expanded in 1898.
 - Made heavy cover papers from c1901 - 1920.
 - Discontinued heavy cover papers in 1923.
 - After 1920, specialized in lightweight papers for condensers, typewriting, medical preparations, favors.
 - Plant expanded in 1924, 1927, 1930, 1954, 1959 and 1967.
 - Concentration on long-fiber paper products after c1935, including teabag paper, hospital products, and other filters.
 - Dexter sold out to Ahlstrom in 2000.
- Site #10
- Royal Prouty wire drawing mill, c1839 - 1857.
 - Site area used as part of Site no 11 by Medlicott Co. c1863 - 1888 (see Site #8)
- Site #11
- Leander Hodgekiss edge tools and machine shop. 1847-1849.
 - Converted to Carroll & Risley paper mill c1849 1857 under several operators.
 - Site area used as Medlicott Co. subsidiary plant c1865 - 1878. See Site #8.
 - Windsor Locks Electric Light Co. took over part of the site in 1893.

- Northern Conn. Light & Power bought Windsor Locks Electric Light c1907-1908. Generated power and distributed gas from Hartford.
- Plant sold to C.H. Dexter Corp in 1942.

Site #12 - George P. Clark built plant for industrial trucks, casters, etc on part of Site #11. 1893. The firm was incorporated as George P. Clark Co and added a power plant in 1906. They continued development of materials handling products.

- Springfield Union July 15, 1958 said that George P. Clark Co sold its land to C. H. Dexter.

Site #13 - H. Haskell and Jabez Hayden gin mill, 1811 - 1933 pre-dated the canal. Converted to silk thread mill in 1938. Mill burned and rebuilt in 1948. Ceased operations in 1913.

Dwight Allen took over the silk mill from 1881 - c1895.

- Gudbrod Brothers. Co. sewing silk plant, c1895 - 1900.
- Windsor Silk Co., c1900-1913. Sold to George P. Clark Co. (Site #12).
- Plant demolished c1919.

Site #14 - Josiah Rice plant made Wesson & Leavett rifles, c1845. Undocumented others made cotton batting and twine c1845 - 49. Converted to thread and twine plane by Wilmarth Thread Co. Operated from c1849 - 1865.

- Used as Medlicott Co subsidiary plant c1865 - 1878. See Site #8.
- F. W. Whittlesey owned tissue paper plant c1878 until his death in 1908.
- new mgmt. group including Whittlesey's widow until August 1914 (Springfield Republican issue of August 11, 1914)
- Springfield Republican of Nov. 23, 1921, said that the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills** was taking over the old Whittlesley paper mill that they had been operating.
- According to the Springfield Republican issue of March 19, 1922, the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills**, which are the former Whittlesey paper Mill, are putting in concrete for new machines.
- According to the Springfield Republican issue of January 4, 1925, the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills**, which was the Whittlesey Paper Mill has been owned by J. N. Smythe of Philadelphia for the past five years. That means that he owned it from about 1921 to about 1925.

-According to the Springfield Republican issue of March 26, 1930, the property of the **Windsor Locks Paper Mills company** has been sold at auction. The auction announcement was in the Boston Herald issue of March 23, 1930

Site #15 - Philip & E. J. Ripley iron rolling mill. c1845 - 1850.
 - Ripley & Talcott c1850 - 1856.
 - Iron works leased to E. C. Woack c1856 - 1857.
 - Enlarged as steel works by Farist & Windsor/Anchor Locks Steel Co., made crucible steel for dies and tools and some steel products with purchased billets, c1860-1895.

Site #16 - Connecticut River Co. rental factory c1846, leased to Connecticut River Mills for printing cloth and umbrella goods. c1847 - 1856.
 - Austin Dunham & Co. bought mill c1856. Used by various textile operations c1856 - 1871.
 - J. R. & George Montgomery leased Dunham mill, 1871, and made specialty cotton yarns and warps beginning in 1867, metal and tinsel yarns in 1886. Montgomery Co. expanded yarn ops. at Site #6 in 1881.
 - Developed tinsel products for telephones, electric products, military braid, decorative fabrics and ribbons; Plant closed with 1920 expansion of Site #6.

Site #17 - Windsor Locks Paper Corp. c1946 - c1955

To provide some information about the Windsor Locks Paper Corp., a set of newspaper articles was found that span the years 1949 to 1959. The "Story of Windsor Locks" shows this company as being formed in 1946. It was owned by Leo Cohen of New York, but operated by Miss Ida Giacomassi of Windsor Locks. Mr. Leo Montemerlo was foreman of the "converting room". It employed 40 men, and operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Springfield Union issue of October 30, 1949 had an ad by the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** for an experienced machine operator.

According to the Springfield Union issue of July 21, 1953, a fire was put out at the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**

According to the Springfield Union of February 25, 1953, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**, which suspended operations in December of 1952, will reopen on March 2.

According to the Springfield union issue of February 3, 1954, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** paid \$40,750 in taxes.

According to the Springfield Union of August 3, 1955 and the Springfield Republican of August 20, 1955, the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** is cleaning up after a massive flood.

According to the Springfield Union of April 29, 1958, a car drove into the canal in front of the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.**, about 1000 feet north of the canal's locks. He was rescued by workers at the plant.

According to the Springfield Union of January 19, 1958, the **Windsor Locks Paper Co.** has shut down for an undefined period.

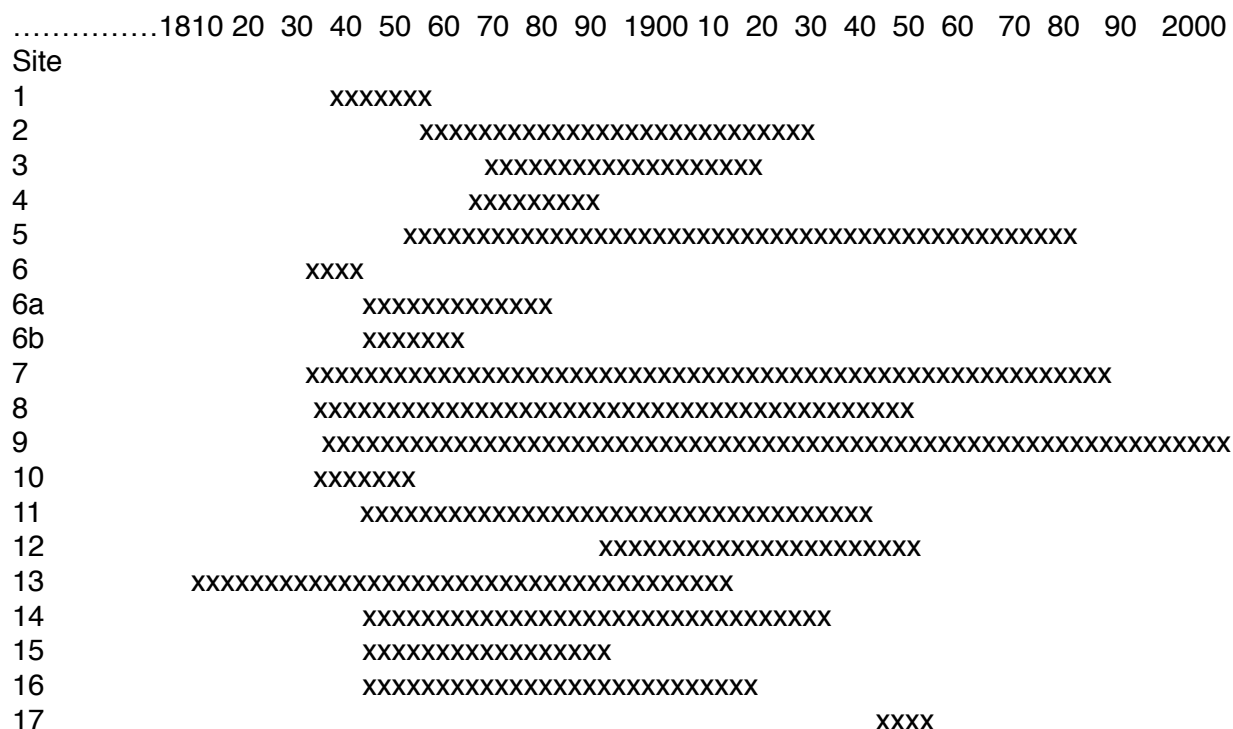
According to the Springfield Union of February 3, 1959, a fire occurred in a generator at the **Windsor Locks Paper Corp.** It was quickly found and extinguished before much damage was done.

7) How the Number of Factories Changed Over Time

The above list of companies at each of the 17 factory sites was quite long and filled with details. It would be useful to know how many companies were operating in any given year. To determine this, we need to identify for each site, the date that a business first opened up, and the date that the last business closed. That information was gotten from the above list. It is presented below.

Site #1 - 1836 — — 1857 (became part of Site #2).
Site #2 - 1857 — — 1930 American Writing Paper ended in 1930.
Site #3 - 1870 — — — — 1920 when it became part of Site #2.
Site #4 - 1867 1890 when it became part of Site #5 (Horton).
Site #5 - 1851 — — 1981 had been Horton, but ended as Crouse-Hinds.
Site #6 - 1835 — 1844 when it divided into 6a and 6b.
Site #6a - 1844 — became part of Montgomery in 1881. Stopped in 1989
Site #6b - 1844 — ended as H. A. Converse in 1864 when it became part of Dexter.
Site #7 - 1833 — bought by Montgomery in 1920, ended operation in 1989.
Site #8 - 1839 — bought by Medlicott in 1863. Ended operation in 1950.
Site #9 - 1840 - Dexter sold out to Ahlstrom in 2000.
Site #10 - 1839 - 1857 sold to Medlicott, ended ops in 1950.
Site #11 - 1847 - Northern Conn Light and Power sold to Dexters in 1942.
Site #12 - 1893 - George P Clark Sold to Dexters in 1958.
Site #13 - 1811 - 1913 sold to George P. Clark, plant demolished in 1919.
Site #14 - 1845 - 1930 Windsor Locks Paper Mills closed.
Site #15 - 1845 - 1895 Farist & Windsor/Anchor Locks Steel Co.
Site #16 - 1846 - 1871 leased by Montgomery, plant closed in 1920.
Site #17 - 1947 - 1955 Windsor Locks Paper Corp.

Some companies owned businesses at multiple sites. In the above list, each company (eg Dexter) is only shown at a single site, so we can identify the number of businesses operating at any one time. Now that we have the start and end dates for each of the 17 sites, we can make a table to represent that data. The table is below:



By counting the number of occupied sites at 25 year increments, we get:

YEAR	Number of Sites Occupied
1850	12
1875	13
1900	11
1925	8
1950	6
1975	3
2000	1

Now we know the number of companies in operation every 25 years from 1850 to 2000. From that and from the other chart we made, we can see that:

- 1) the first company to operate a factory after the canal was built, started in 1833.
- 2) one factory still remained in existence in 2000, and is still in existence as of this writing in 2017.
- 3) there were never more than 13 factories operating at one time.
- 4) the number of companies operating at the same time remained at about 12 from 1859 to 1900, and then it slowly declined to 1.

Given the above chart, we are in a position to study the factors involved in the rise of the factories and in their demise. We shall do that in section 9 of this article. Before we do that, there is one thing left to do. The only things we know about the

companies so far are their names, their dates of operation, the products they made, and the site or sites they operated in. While it is beyond the scope of this article to delve deeply into the history of each of the 70 companies, it would be useful to take a bit of a closer look at the companies operating these factories at a single time. We will do this for the year, 1909. The reason that year was picked is that the information is available for that year.

8) Photos & Descriptions of the 12 Factories Operating in 1909

In 1909, the Windsor Locks Journal published a booklet which had photos and descriptions of the 12 companies operating factories along the canal at that time. Edward Lanati used the photos and descriptions from that booklet in his 1976 article. He attributed them to the Windsor Locks Journal booklet, but did not say who the author was or what the title of the booklet was. Those photos and write-ups are used here. The writing style is dated, but fun to read. Much of the spelling and word usage are archaic. However reading the old 1909 writing style adds to the experience of learning about those old companies. That writeup could not be improved upon. It begins here and goes on to the end of section 8.



J. R. Montgomery Company (cotton warps, mercerized yarn novelty yarn)

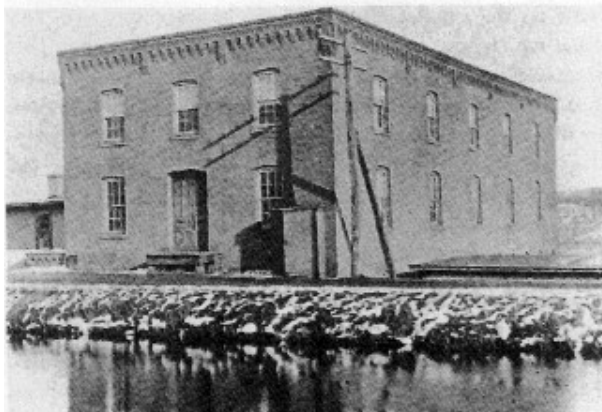
The J. R. Montgomery Company - The firm of J. R. Montgomery was established in 1871 for the purpose of manufacturing Cotton Warps used in Satinets (*cotton fabric with feel of satin*) and Union Cassimeres (*thin, lightweight woolen fabric*). The firm was then composed of J. R. Montgomery as the active partner, with two others who constituted the partnership. A few years after, the outside interests were bought by J. R. Montgomery, who continued under the old name, until 1885. George Montgomery was taken into the business as an active partner, and the line of manufactures was enlarged, taking up the making of Novelty Yarns, which was new and unique line of Manufacture. The firm stands as the pioneer in this branch of textile industry in this country and this part of the business which is conducted in a separate factory, has grown steadily and rapidly, until its plant is of large proportions and s so evenly adjusted in all its parts as to furnish exceptional facilities. In 1891, the firm of J. R. Montgomery was merged into a

corporation under the name of The J. R. Montgomery Co, of which the novelty yarn mill was built. The capital of \$350,000 was invested in enlarging the scope of the business.

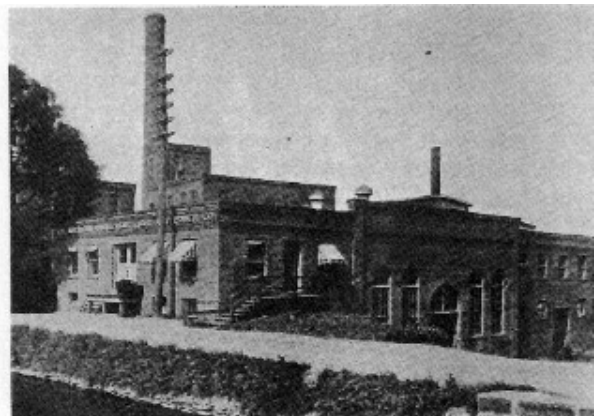
In 1896, this Company was first in the field in placing upon the market in this country an entirely new product. Mercerized Cotton Yarn. It has within a few years become widely known and extensively used. The Company is possessed of facilities for producing large quantities of Cotton Warp, in both plain and fancy colors, as well as Double and Twist yarns in carded combed Egyptian, Sea Island and Peeler stocks in all colors and printed effects. They manufacture at their Novelty Yarns mill all Yarns to produce novel effects in fabrics or trimmings, used all known fibers, as well as gold, silver, and copper tinsel, chemical compounds, glass, etc.

The Medicott Company - The manufacturing of Worsted and Woolen Underwear for men, women and Children is the business of this Company, and its goods are favorably known to the textile trade. The main mill was built and business started in 1863-64 by W. G. Medicott and the present Company was formed in 1868. About 1880, the late C. D. Chaffee purchased controlling interest in the Company, and in following years added largely to both the buildings and the equipment.

Northern Connecticut Light and Power Company - This Company supplies Electricity and Gas for light, heat and power. The Company purchased and consolidated the local electric lighting companies of Windsor Locks and Enfield and built the fine new plant shown above at Windsor Locks in 1907-8. It is equipped with modern machinery for producing electricity. Gas is brought in from Hartford.



The Medicott Company

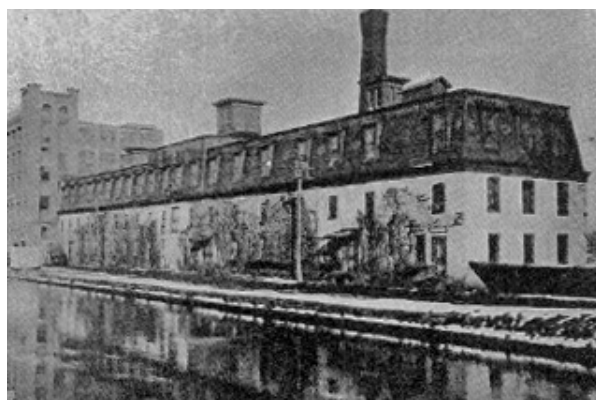


**Northern Connecticut Light
and Power Company**

The Anchor Mills Paper Company - The mill occupied by this Company is one of the oldest in use on the bank and was built in 1833. It was built for a paper mill and conducted by Persse & Brooks, who has as one of their contracts the making of the paper for the New York Herald, which they continued up to the time of the Civil War. The building was later used as a wool scouring mill by Dwight Skinner and Company. It again became a paper mill in 1894 when alterations and additions were made and new and modern machinery was installed, and the present joint stock company was formed.

The company manufactures Railroad, Yellow, Buff and White Copy and Tissues, Impressions Copying Books, Silver and Anti-Tarnish Tissues, and many Specialties.

Windsor Locks Machine Co. - This company was started in 1881 by E. E. Latham, Edwin Upton and George Glover. Mr. Latham was killed by an accident and the business was continued for many years by Messrs. Upton and Glover. They sold out their interest in 1901 to Orson T. Cone, A. F. Saxton and C. William Sadler. Messers. Cone and Saxton retired and the business is now under the management of Mr Sadler. It is a stock corporation. The building was partially destroyed by fire in 1903, but was rebuilt, and an addition was made in 1907 to accommodate increasing business.



The Anchor Mills Paper Company



**Windsor Locks Machine Co
Paper Mill & Steam Laundry Machinery**

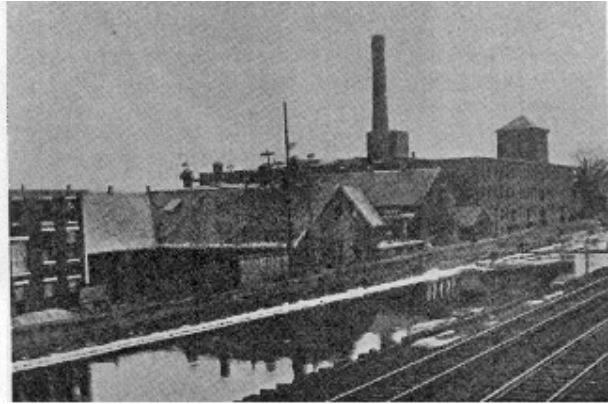
C. H. Dexter & Sons Grist & Saw Mill - The oldest industry in town, and operated today by the fifth generation. Here in "ye olden time" was ground the Flour and Meal for the farmers of the surrounding country. Later the mill did wholesale grinding for the Springfield, Hartford and New Haven Markets, which had been superseded in the march of events. Now an extensive Flour, Grain and Feed business is carried on. It was in the basement of this old mill that C.H. Dexter began the manufacture of paper in 1835.

C.H.Dexter & Sons Paper Mill - The original wooden mill on this site, built by Charles H. Dexter, was destroyed by fire in 1875. Rebuilt in modern construction in 1876 under direction of Herbert R. Coffin, who was admitted to partnership in 1865 and succeeded in management and ownership of the company until his death in 1901. The growing business demanded larger facilities and the mill has since been enlarged three times: in 1881, 1898, and 1908, besides the purchase of Mill No. 2 at Suffield in 1902.

Here are made the famous Princess and Unique Cover Papers, also the Star Manifold Linen and Onion Skin Papers and other Star Brand Specialties, Tissues, Bristols, Toilet, etc., which go the world over. "The sun never sets on the Star Mill products."

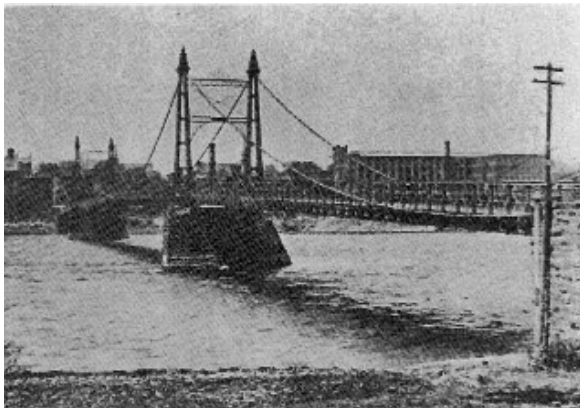


C. H. Dexter & Sons
Grist & Saw Mill established 1769

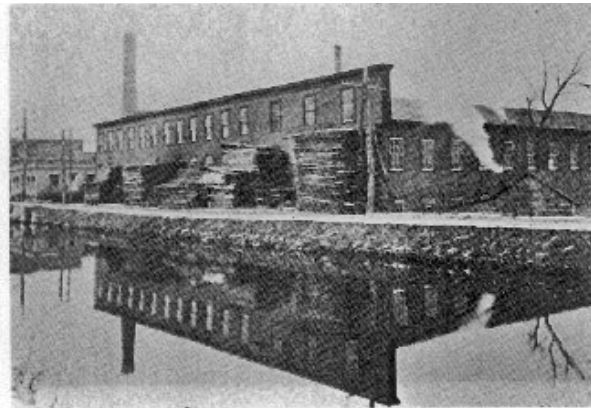


Paper Mill

George P. Clark Company- The product of this Company consists of Hand, Platform and Special Trucks, Patent Rubber and Iron Wheel Casters, Drying, Ventilating and Exhaust Fans, Special Drying Machinery for Paper manufacturers, etc. The Trucks are made in a large variety of styles suitable for every purpose and for moving all kinds of material. The business was originated by George P. Clark, who in 1870 invented and patented a Rubber Roll for wool scouring, which he placed on the market. He secured other patents, one of which, a method of attaching tires to iron truck wheels, became a valuable feature of the business. The main part of the present mill was built in 1893, and a large addition made a few years later. In 1901 an incorporated company was formed, and in 1902 an electric power plant was installed, new and modern machinery put in, and individual electric motors attached to the various machines.



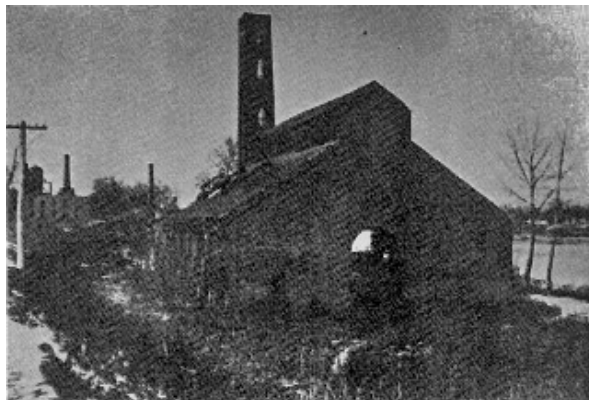
Suspension Bridge
Windsor Locks - Warehouse Pt.



George P. Clark Company
Trucks, Casters, Ventilating and
Exhaust Fans, Drying Machinery

Windsor & Farist Steel Mill - Formerly conducted by Windsor and Farist. A flourishing business was done for many years in this mill, which produced some of the finest cutlery steel in the country.

Windsor Silk Company - The Silk business was begun in Windsor Locks by Haskell & Hayden, who in 1938 built the mill shown at the left of the Whittelsey Paper mill. It was one of the pioneers in this industry in Connecticut, and the manufacture of silk has been continued to the present time in the same building which is one of the oldest mills on the canal bank.



Windsor & Farist Steel Mill



Windsor Silk Company

The Windsor Paper Company - The original owners of this mill were Persse and Brooks, who were succeeded by the Seymour Paper Company. This Company conducted a large business for many years and acquired a wide reputation for high grade Book and Cover Papers. Early in the year 1899 the mill was acquired by a company known as the Windsor Paper Company, and a few months later in the same year was purchased by the American Writing Paper Company, which had its main offices in Holyoke, Mass. The new owners at once began the work of remodeling, and extensive alterations and repairs were made and new modern machinery installed at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The remodeled plant resumed operations on April, 1901. The buildings of the plant extend 650 feet along the canal bank, and are 225 feet deep at the widest point. It is equipped throughout with modern machinery for the economical production of Paper. It has three paper machines, with a daily capacity of 80,000 pounds. Its product is High-Grade Rope Papers, Specialties, Boards for Box makers, etc.

The E. Horton & Son Co. - The industry was started in a small way by Eli Horton, who was the inventor of the Chuck which bears his name. The business was conducted until 1873 under the name of E. Horton & Son, at which time a stock company was formed and the present corporation succeeded to the business. Property adjoining on the North was purchased from A. W. Converse & Co., and an iron foundry was added to the regular business of making Chucks. In 1903, an addition was built which more than double the capacity of the plant. The Company's works are equipped throughout with

the best tools and machinery that can be procured, and they have perfected many ingenious special machines for the economical production of their goods. The Horton Universal Chuck was placed on the market in 1855 and it has been acknowledged standard ad all Universal Chucks operated by means of rack and screw are copies of Mr. Horton's original invention. The Company makes Chucks in sizes suitable for holding the smallest drill to the largest car wheel, in an endless variety of styles. Their Goods go into all parts of the civilized world, and their exhibitions of Chucks in all great expositions have been awarded the first prize.



**The Windsor Paper Company
Div. of American Writing Paper Co.**



**The E. Horton & Son Co.
Lathe Chucks**

This ends the section that was taken from Edward Lanati's 1976 article, which he took from the booklet published by the Windsor Locks Journal.

9) Some Factories Converted to Tobacco Business in the 1900s

The "Story of Windsor Locks Connecticut" pamphlet provides interesting information on what some companies did to make use of factories along the canal in the 1900s, when their traditional manufacturing businesses were in decline. Two of these companies were the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Co., the Fuller-Russell Tobacco Co. and the Winstead Co.

In 1923, Howard Russell, working for the Connecticut Valley Tobacco Growers Association, leased three floors of the Montgomery Company's concrete mill, to store cases of tobacco. The Growers Association dissolved in 1927, and Mr. Russell teamed with the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company to lease that same space. They used it to make chewing tobacco. That operation ceased in 1933, and they went into the business of packing cigar leaf tobacco, and they also continued to store tobacco on those floors.

In 1937, Mr. Russell worked for the W. H. Winstead Company who was using space in the Horton Building for their tobacco business, but they needed more space, so they leased three floors of the Montgomery company's number 1 mill. At that time, Montgomery was cutting back on producing cotton goods.

In 1939, the Bloch Brothers installed modern curing rooms for the tobacco on the second floor of Montgomery's Building number 5, which was called their Dye House. Shortly thereafter, they bought the entire building from the Montgomery Company.

In 1941, the Winstead Company decided to get out of the cigar business and to stick with the cigarette business. A new company was formed, called the Fuller-Russell Tobacco Company. The Fuller-Russell Tobacco Company and the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company were still operating when the "Story of Windsor Locks Connecticut" pamphlet was written in 1954.

This section of this chapter was added to provide more insight to what was happening to the mills and factories along the canal in the early to mid 1900s, when the manufacturing companies were faltering. We saw in Section 7 above, that the number of companies in the mills was going down during that time period. Now we see that some enterprising tobacco companies took advantage of that to use those mills, which were designed for other purposes, to store and process tobacco. The Fuller-Russell company closed in 1971. The fact that tobacco companies worked in the factories in the 1920-70 timeframe is not well known.

10) Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The goal of this article was to learn:

- the history of the canal and the factories along it,
- the factors which caused their initiation,
- the factors which caused their rise and their fall, and
- the resulting effects on the town of Windsor Locks.

(Background) Mills and factories, including those which were water-powered, existed in Pine Meadow, in the 1700s, long before the canal was built in 1829.

The history of the canal can be summarized as follows:

- A group of businessmen from Hartford planned for and funded the canal, to allow the passage of boats between Hartford and Springfield. Without a canal, boats could not go up-river past the Enfield Falls. There were special boats which could go over the falls, but they were difficult and expensive to operate.
- The canal was built to make money from both the transportation of people and goods, and the selling of water power to the future mills.
- The building of the canal did result in its use for the transportation of people and goods, and the result was immediate.
- The canal resulted in the town of Windsor Locks being incorporated in 1854.
- The boom in transporting people and goods by boat only lasted about 15 years (1829-1844).
- The train line connected Hartford and Springfield in 1844. When this happened, the railroad immediately took over the transport of both people and goods between Hartford and Springfield
- After 1844, the canal company had to rely on selling water power to make its money.

The factories along the canal were located on seventeen sites between the canal and the river. A chronological list of companies that occupied each of the seventeen lots during the period from 1830 to 2000 was shown. For each company, the list gave its primary products, the dates it started and ended operations, and the site it was on.

The next step was to develop a chart of how many companies were in operation in those factories in any given year between 1830 and 2000. The results were:

- The first mill along the canal started in 1833.
- There were never more than 13 mills operating along the canal at any one time.
- The number of mills operating along the canal was flat at about 12 from 1850 to 1900.
- The number of operating mills went steadily down, from 11 in 1900, to 8 in 1925 to 6 in 1950 to 3 in 1975 to one in 1990.

Of the more than 70 companies along the canal from 1733 to 1990, we saw that:

- Many of them didn't last very long.
- Many changed management often.
- There were a number of mergers.
- A few companies (Dexter, Horton, Montgomery) did last a long time.

It would be outside of the scope of this article to review all 70 of the companies that ever operated in the factories by the canal. We reviewed the 12 companies that were in operation in the factories along the canal in 1909. While not a review of all of the factories, this snapshot of the mills in 1909 was useful. The information was from the 1976 article by Lanati. Finally, we reviewed some tobacco companies which found ways to use the factories when the manufacturing companies no longer needed the space. The use by those small tobacco companies was not a major factor in Windsor Locks business, but it is an interesting twist to what was happening as the manufacturing companies going out of business.

What were some of the problems that companies along the canal faced? This topic was not covered in this paper. The Raber and Malone report covers the topic. The problems included:

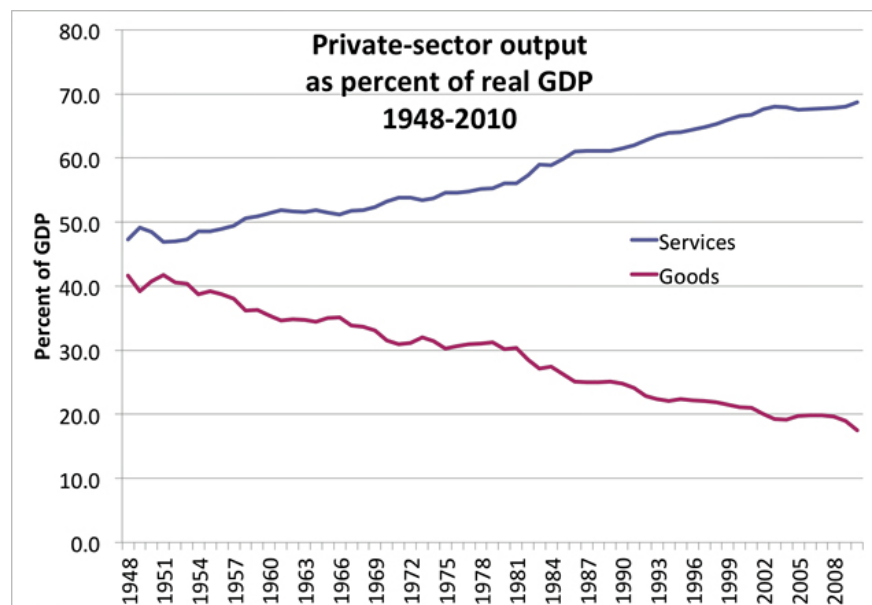
- The factories were often flooded, because they were in a flood zone of the Connecticut River.
- Fires could not be put out easily because fire trucks couldn't get to the factories.
- People who worked at the mills walked to work or went by bicycle. That limited the distance that workers could live from the factories.
- The factories had to keep re-tooling their manufacturing machinery because of continual changing public tastes.

What "outside forces" caused the growth and the demise of the companies? The following are some ideas from United States history which help in understanding what happened with the canal and the factories along it.

- The companies along the canal built up quickly in the 1830s and 40s, just before the Civil War started. The Civil War was from 1861-1865. Some of the factories provided guns and other supplies for the Army.
- The Second Industrial Revolution in the United States occurred between 1840 and 1870. New technologies became available for mass production and for efficient transportation of goods and people. The factories along the canal were an example of this.

- After 1950, the manufacturing industry of the United States went into a steep decline, as can be seen in the following chart.

The following chart shows that American businesses were switching from manufacturing goods to providing services, starting around 1950. Competition from low-cost manufacturing in other countries was one of the key factors. Large multi-national companies were taking over from single owner factories. This was similar to the “Mom and Pop” stores being replaced by the stores of large national chains. All of these factors played roles in the decline of factories across America, including those along the canal in Windsor Locks.



“History Lesson: Understanding the Decline in Manufacturing”
MinnPost, Louis D. Johnston, Feb. 22, 2012

What effects did the demise of the factories along the canal have on Windsor Locks?

1. There was a large loss of jobs, especially for unskilled workers.
2. The town lost a great deal of tax revenue.
3. The downtown Windsor Locks lost its ability to attract outside entrepreneurs, investors and their money.
4. The loss of the business leaders meant there were fewer people in Windsor Locks who could act as role models for the next generation of potential businessmen.
5. The town lost a group of men who were not only good at business but who played key roles in Windsor Locks government. It is important for a town or city to have government leaders who are well versed in business.
6. For more than a century, Main Street had been the business center and the social hub of Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks lost its manufacturing industries at about the same time it lost the retail side of Main Street in the “re-development” project, which did not result in the return of retail businesses as expected. After losing both the factories and its retail outlet center, Windsor Locks became a quite different town.

7. Windsor Locks lost many of its major "benefactors," that is, rich and powerful men who made large donations to the town of Windsor Locks over the century in which the factories were strong.
8. The demise of the factories, followed by fires at some of the abandoned factories, left a string of abandoned structures which have fallen further into blighted condition. This has been going on for more than a half a century.

Towns across the entire United States saw manufacturing businesses rise in the industrial revolution of the 1800s, and die off during the switch from manufacturing to services in the late 1900s. This was not unique to Windsor Locks.

Are there lessons that can be learned from what happened?

Here are two possibilities.

- 1) Towns and cities, like individuals, are investors. Probably the most frequently given advice to investors is: Diversify. Don't put all of your investments in one area.
- 2) When the jobs in the mills went away, there were few alternatives for unskilled workers. The best hedge that a person can have against the loss of a job is having skills which are in demand, and which stay in demand. The best options are a college degree or a license in a skilled trade (electrician, plumber, heating and air conditioning).

The lasting impact of the canal being built was that Windsor Locks was born.

Doing research to determine what happened in the past is difficult. Learning how to avoid problems that arose in the past is much more difficult. However it is the most important reason to study history. Possible "lessons learned" need to be hypothesized, and then opened for discussion. Discussion insures that better ideas rise to the surface, and ideas that do not hold up under scrutiny are dismissed. The ideas written here are merely suggestions for further discussion and debate. The reader should develop his/her own ideas as to what lessons can and should be learned. I hope that the ideas expressed here are useful to you in doing that.

I thank Mickey Danyluck for providing me with copies of the Raber and Malone (1991) report and the Lanati (1976) article. Both are out of print, and are very difficult to obtain. Both turned out to be extremely valuable in the development of this article.

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Chapter 34

Jack Redmond: Windsor Locks Historian



Jack Redmond

Jack Redmond was a well-known and beloved member of the Windsor Locks community. He was born in New Haven on December 24, 1922. He played ice hockey in high school, and graduated from Commercial High in New Haven in 1941. He was in the US Army from 1943-1946 and served on Guam, where he was made First Sergeant, then returned to New Haven and married Rita Bethke in 1946. He graduated from the University of New Haven in 1955. The Redmonds then moved to California, Connecticut, and Indiana, before settling in Windsor Locks in 1964. Jack worked at Combustion Engineering for 21 years, and served on the Windsor Locks Fire Commission for 5 years. He also volunteered with his wife at Bradley Field for 24 years. Jack and Rita were married for 65. Jack and Rita had 2 daughters, Nancy and Patti, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. His wife, Rita, passed away in September, 2012. After the loss of his wife, Jack moved to Cape Cod. He passed away there on September 1, 2014. (<http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/redmond.html>)

Jack and his wife, Rita, liked to travel, play golf, and spend time at the beach. They often could be seen at the Donut Kettle or attending summer concerts. Jack retired from Combustion Engineering in 1985. He lived in Windsor Locks for 48 years. He was such a passionate basketball fan, that he was made a member of the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame. While Jack did a lot for the town, the thing that he will always be remembered for is his weekly column in the Windsor Locks Journal, named "Cabbages and Kings", which ran for 24 years. (<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/jack-and-rita-redmond/>)

In his first column, on April 24, 1975 Jack laid out his vision for his series of columns beautifully, simply and with elegance. He said: "The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things: of shoes, and ships, and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings. And why the sea is boiling hot, and whether pigs have wings". (a quote from Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass Darkly).

He continued: "Move over, Earl Wilson, William Buckley, Bill Lee, Art Buchwald, Erma Bombeck, a novice is endeavoring to break into the big leagues. I do not, in my wildest dreams, ever hope to attain the writings of the above-mentioned writers of the fourth estate, however, a guy has to start somewhere, and what better place than Windsor Locks."

That was an elegant piece of thinking and writing. He had both high hopes and a self-effacing style. He was obviously well-acquainted with literature, and he was going to take high-style writing to a small town setting. What he said next showed a great deal of insight into the soul of Windsor Locks. He said: "But enough about the writer ... people want to hear and read about people - people who make up the news in Windsor Locks and Connecticut, people who have made their marks in our town by way of the political, civic, fraternal and coaching circles. Mr reasons are very simple.... people make the best stories."

Jack took a unique approach. He wanted to write about people because that is what people like to read about. He wasn't going to write about everyone. He was going to focus on "people who have made their marks", on leaders on people who stand out because of their accomplishments. Anyone who has read his columns knows that he achieved his goals admirably. He turned out to be a leader and a role model, but he didn't write about himself, so it is left to this article to pay him tribute.

"Cabbages and Kings"

- ran for 24 years.
- covered approximately 1,200 columns, and thus about 1,200 individuals.
- is organized into 28 volumes in the Windsor Locks Library.
- is available on-line via the Windsor Locks Public Library website.

<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/cabbages-and-kings>

Jack Redmond's weekly series of columns on local individuals provides a unique history of the town from 1975 to 1999. It is not a history as would be found in a history book. It is a more personal view of recent Windsor Locks' happenings as seen through the eyes of the citizens being interviewed. He wrote about history as it was happening.

Jack's columns are more "person-centric" than "event-centric", so they help bring events to life in written form. All of Jack's columns in which people describe their own experiences are considered by historians to be "primary sources", which are the most valuable type of sources for historical information.

Jack's final column was as poignant and thought-provoking as his first. He wrote with charm, wit, insightfulness and wisdom. In that last column, he looked back over his 24 years of writing columns for the Windsor Locks Journals and said: "I have had the honor and sincere pleasure of meeting so many fine people in town ... the clergy, politicians, coaches, teachers and students and just regular folks that made up this fine town."

It is important to read Jack's last column closely and carefully. Jack did not want to stop writing. He stated why he was ending his long series of columns when he said: "It's not my age. I have not lost the ability to write or to type, or meet people face to face for an interview,...Frankly, it is just too difficult to find new people to interview for their stories. At times, I had 10 or more intended interviewees, but the list is disappearing."

Jack left it to the people of Windsor Locks to figure out why he was having a hard time finding more people that he wanted to interview. Yet it would behoove anyone interested in the future of the town to try to figure out what he meant. That is beyond the scope of this article. However, chapters 36 and 37 of this book attempt to shed light on that question.

Jack didn't think of himself as a historian. Historians write about the past. Jack wrote about the people that he interviewed. Of course, many of those interviewees talked about their past, but Jack's focused on the people he was interviewing. Jack left the town with a treasure trove of information that historians can examine and interpret.

The French mathematician and philosopher, Henri Poincare, was asked, "What is the difference between an intelligent person and an average person?" Henri's answer was that when you present a difficult problem to a highly intelligent person and to a person of average intelligence, the most important aspects of the problem are quickly seen by the highly intelligent person. By that definition, Jack Redmond was a highly intelligent person. He realized that if you want the people of Windsor Locks to read what you write, you have to write about what they want to read. Jack said, in his opening column, that he was going to write about the leaders of the Windsor Locks community, because people are what people want to read about. He did just that, and it worked. There is a lesson there for current and future historians. Just writing about events of the past is not nearly as interesting as telling the stories of people that the townspeople know or have known, and can relate to.

Sources:

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<http://www.windsorlockshistory.org/cabbages-and-kings>

Listing of the volumes of "Cabbages and Kings" columns on the Windsor Locks Public Library website

Chapter 35

Red Leary: Athlete, Entrepreneur, Community Leader

Elmer G. Leary was a well known citizen of Windsor Locks from the early 1900s to the 1960s. Everyone called him “Red”. He was an athlete, an entrepreneur, and a prominent leader in the town’s civic and fraternal organizations.

Red Leary’s Sports Accomplishments

Red Leary was born on January 28, 1898. He was a member of the first graduating class of the Loomis Institute in Windsor in 1918. He blossomed as an athlete in high school.



Edgar G. “Red” Leary is second from right in middle row.

Red was elected to the Windsor Locks Athletic Hall of Fame. The writeup of his election to that group states:

During his tenure at Loomis, he was a star on their initial football team and played other varsity sports as well. Following his graduation from Loomis, several colleges pursued him to play football, but he enlisted in the United States Army.

After serving in the Army, Red returned to Windsor Locks and joined the local “Clay Hill” football team which went undefeated for two consecutive seasons in the early 1920s, winning all 14 games and two successive championships. This was during an era, before the advent of professional football, as we know it today, when the very best athletes competed only on local and regional teams. He also played two seasons with the West Side professional football

team in Hartford. During these years, Red also played basketball on various semi-pro teams in Connecticut.

The Clay Hill Football Team brought Windsor Locks to the attention of all of New England and beyond. Townspeople embraced the team and supported it by attending its games in large numbers. These were truly great days in a long and distinguished history of Windsor Locks athletics.

Red Leary's Service Station

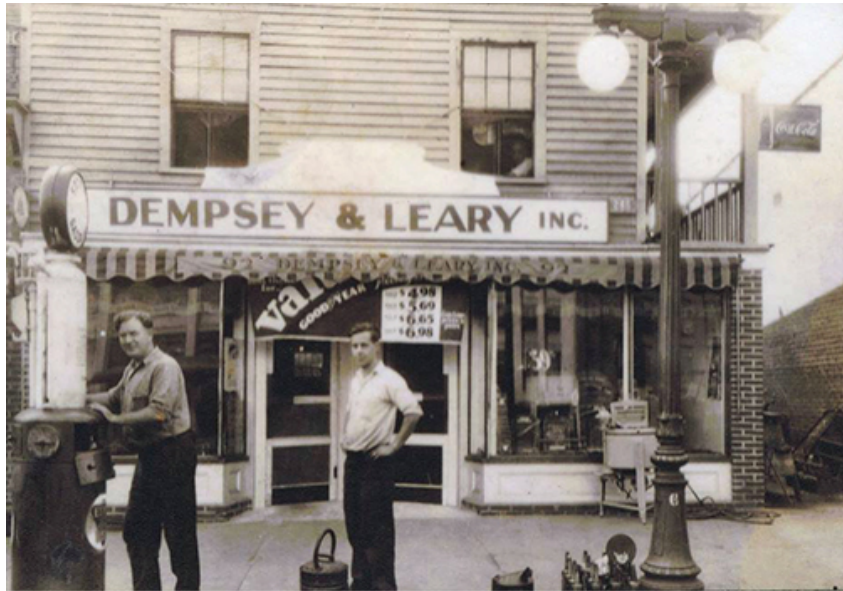
Red Leary was a Windsor Locks' businessman in the first half of the 1900s. He started in business as a partner of Thomas F. Dempsey in the ownership of a unique service station on Main St. In the photograph below, notice that the gas pumps were right on the curb of Main Street. A note on the back of this photo said that it was the last gas station in the state of Connecticut to have its pumps right on the street.



**Red Leary's Mobil Station
First National Supermarket**

The Dempsey and Leary gas station was started in 1923. Below is a photo of Tom and Red in front of their service station. Red and Tom owned that station jointly from 1923 to 1937, when Red bought Tom's share and became the sole owner. Their business was at 92 Main St, between Church and Spring Streets. According to the August 17, 1962 Springfield Union, their business included not only automotive servicing, but also radio sales and servicing.

The following photo shows the same gas pump as previous photo, but it was taken from the other direction.



Red Leary and Tom Dempsey outside their service station ~ mid 1920s

Below is a photo of Tom Dempsey and Red Leary in the parts department of their service station.



Thomas Dempsey and Elmer "Red" Leary in their service station at
92 Main St. Windsor Locks. ~ Mid 1920s.
Between Church & Spring Streets, south of the First National Supermarket

In the next photo, you can better visualize the location of the Dempsey and Leary service station by noting that it was across Main Street from the Montgomery building.



Leary and Dempsey Service Station, 92 Main St. Windsor Locks. Conn.

Dempsey and Leary's service station began to sell household appliances! Here is an ad that they placed in the Springfield Republican on December 4, 1930, which featured radios.

Local newspapers had many such advertisements by Dempsey and Leary from 1930 to 1933, which featured radios, refrigerators and other household appliances. Below is an April 17, 1932 ad for Majestic Refrigerators.

A Standard Model Westinghouse Radio in Pendleton, Ore., logged all of these 52 stations in an hour and three quarters. Can you do as well?

Here is proof in this single evening's log that Westinghouse will make the most of your radio location. Westinghouse Radio will bring in your local and distant stations and with clarity, tone and volume.

Your Westinghouse Radio dealer has four Westinghouse models to show you. They range in price from \$112.50 to \$150.00 with remote control. Hear them... and begin to really enjoy radio. Small down payment puts set in your home.

MODEL WEL-8—feature, apartment radiolux of Early Elimination design in walnut, radio built, 4-tube screen-grid super-heterodyne, \$150.00 list price. Tone control optional at \$5.00 additional.

Here is one of the new Westinghouse Radio features over the R. S. G. Research every Thursday morning.

Go to your nearest Westinghouse Radio Dealer for FREE Entry Blank for the \$10.00 Radio Idea Contest.

Westinghouse Radio

THE PIONEER OF RADIO IN THE HOME

CARLISLE HARDWARE CO. 2000 Main St., Springfield, Mass. T. F. CUSHING 310 Westinghouse Bldg. SPRINGFIELD RADIO CO. 1000 Main St., Springfield, Mass. J. W. NOYAL 122 Main St.	LEO DE MONTGOMERY 10-14 Catherine St., Springfield, Mass. ALFRED LA CROIX, JR. 100 Main St., Springfield, Mass. GEORGE W. WILCOX, INC. 20-22 North St., Springfield, Mass.	M. J. KELLY FURN. CO. 100 Main St., Springfield, Mass. HERSCHER BROS. 10 West St., Ludlow, Mass. CENTRAL MASS. ELEC. CO. 100 Main St., Springfield, Mass.
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SEEKSHIRE RUBBER CO.
 10 West St., Springfield, Mass.
DEMPSEY & LEARY
 Springfield, Mass.
ALLEN & SAMPLE
 100 Elm St., Springfield, Mass.
DEMPSEY & LEARY
 10 Elm St., Springfield, Mass.

For information as to the 1932 National Westinghouse Radio Contest and the annual Government Bureau R. S. G. Radio Idea Contest, write to:
WESTINGHOUSE-SAVAGE E. S. CO.
 40 Thompson St., Springfield, Mass.
 100 Elm St., Springfield, Mass.
 SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01103
 FROM 1932-1933

MAJESTIC HAS DONE IT!



**first in the Quality field
at the sensational price of**

Only \$99⁵⁰

**Perfect Refrigeration
even at
high noon in
the tropics!**

Installed in Your Home for \$109.50

**F. O. B.
FACTORY**

CONNECTICUT
 THOMPSONVILLE
 P. W. Zieman Co.
 WINDSOR
 Theodore R. Ahrens
 WINDSOR LOCKS
 Dempsey & Leary, Inc.
VERMONT
 BARRE
 H. A. Goodrich
 Vermont Music Co.
 BRATTLEBORO
 J. C. Johnson
 BURLINGTON
 W. G. Reynolds Co.
 CASTLETON
 C. J. Coon
 CHESTER DEPOT
 E. J. Davis Hardware Co.
 DANBY
 George LeVam
 DERRY LINE
 J. E. Perkins
 ENDSBURG FALLS
 Fay F. Duffy
 ESSEX JUNCTION
 A. D. Douglas
 ISLAND POND
 Scribner's Garage
 MANCHESTER CENTRE

In 1941, Red sold his service station, and opened a larger store in a new, building on the corner of Grove and Main Streets. His new store gave him more floor space to display the appliances.

His new store added more electrical appliances and home furnishings. This store was in operation from 1941 to 1962, when he leased it to Dominick Auto Parts. Red sold his store's inventory and retired in 1962.



Red Leary's store, Corner of Main & Grove Streets

Red was married to Wilhemina Driscoll. They had three children, Sheila, Mary Ellen and William. All three were quite accomplished. William became a lawyer. Mary Ellen graduated "Cum Laude" from Boston College's School of Nursing. Sheila graduated from Emmanuel College and became an elementary school teacher in Windsor Locks. Sheila was also an excellent equestrienne.

Red was active in the community during and after his career. He was active in the Lions Club, the 4H Club, the Boy Scouts, and the American Legion. A search of local newspapers showed dozens of articles about his leadership in these organizations.

The November 14, 1943 issue of the Springfield Republican had an article about the first venture of the Lions Club which had been founded earlier that year. Red Leary led a campaign to buy an ambulance for the town of Windsor Locks. Red Leary, together with his committee, consisting of Thomas A. Grasso, Philip J. Kohler, Arthur F. Cannon and Fred J. Kervick organized a door to door solicitation to collect the necessary funds. They used the money to buy a eight cylinder Oldsmobile ambulance.

The May 22, 1953 Springfield Union had an article in which, Red Leary, President of the Lions Club, bought a 1953 Packard ambulance to replace the 1943 ambulance which they had bought for the town a decade earlier. That ambulance had been used 650 times in that decade.

Red was honored at the Old Timers Night celebration in the Fireman's hall of the "new" Fire and Police Building. (Springfield Union, Dec. 15, 1958)

Red Leary died at the age of 77, on May 1, 1975. He will be remembered as a star athlete, an army veteran, a successful local businessman, a community leader and family man.



**Elmer G. "Red" Leary
1898-1975**

Chapter 36

Socioeconomic Status: Comparing Windsor Locks with other Connecticut Towns in 1960, 1970 and 1980

Background

Socio-Economic status (SES) is a combined measure of persons or places based on income, education and occupation. Income, education and occupation are highly correlated. People with higher levels of education generally have higher incomes and more desirable jobs. Traveling through the towns and cities of Connecticut, one can quickly get a feel for which towns have a higher or lower socioeconomic status. The downtown buildings, the homes, the parks and the streets all give off signs of higher or lower socioeconomic status. That, in turn, has a large effect on the future of the town. Generally, individuals and families move into communities with as high an economic status as they can afford. The effects of socioeconomic status on physical and psychological health, family life, the education of children, political participation, and other variables have been studied.

The choices that a town makes in terms of taxation have an effect on the future socioeconomic status of the town. Low taxes mean less money for education, for avoiding blight, and for cultural events. Choices that a town makes in terms of zoning, the inclusion of subsidized housing, and the use of tools such as Architectural Control Boards, have an enormous effect on a town's socioeconomic status.

The purpose of this article is not politics (that is, affecting the future), but history (what happened in the past). Windsor Locks has had a rich history of changing environments which have evolved to its current state. The fact that the town is on the Connecticut River yielded for industry because the river provided opportunities for transportation and water power. A transportation problem on the river led to the building of the canal, which caused Windsor Locks to be incorporated as a separate town. The river and the existence of cities such as Hartford and Springfield near the river, led to the building of the train line through Windsor Locks. Factories built up along the canal, and in the early 1900, immigration from Europe provided the unskilled laborers needed by the factories. A vibrant and bustling town grew up along Main Street, which ran alongside the canal and the railroad track.

Until the 1950s, Windsor Locks consisted of the "downtown" section between Main and West Streets. Everything to the west of West Street was primarily farmland. Citizens of other towns came to Windsor Locks to shop. A great deal of wealth was created by a number of individuals and families in the downtown section of Windsor Locks. In the 1950s, Bradley Field and the area around it grew into a powerful aviation-

based community. Large aviation industries moved in, and began hiring. Windsor Locks expanded rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s. Population increased by 120% in the 1950s, and another 30% in the 1960s. To house that population, large numbers of tract homes were built in the area between West Street and Bradley Field. By 1980, there was little land left for development. Windsor Locks was “full”.

In the 1960s, the town government began the process of “Re-development” of Main Street’s “downtown area”. It bought up all of the retail stores along Main Street and the buildings behind them which were contained a large number of low-cost rental rooms and apartments. In the 1970s, all of those buildings were razed, to make room for new businesses to move in. Unfortunately the influx of new businesses never materialized. Some of the land was used to build housing. A few businesses, such as the CVS Pharmacy and a Dunkin Doughnut shop did appear.

Since the 1980s, no more major changes occurred Windsor Locks which affected the nature of the town. Fortunately, in 1980, researchers at the University of Connecticut did a study of the socioeconomic status of all of the cities and town of Connecticut. They used US Census data from the as far back as 1960, to come up with measures of each town’s education, and the incomes and jobs of its residents. Then they combined those three measures into a single measure of Socioeconomic Status (SES) for each town.

This study by University of Connecticut researchers is virtually unknown in Windsor Locks. The purpose of this article is to summarize the study and its results, and to make that information available to townspeople who are interested in learning how their town compared with other towns of Connecticut in 1960, 1970 and 1980.

The 1983 Study of the Socioeconomic Status of Connecticut Towns

On Nov. 1, 1983, William H. Groff and Robert W. Braden, of the University of Connecticut, published a research study called: “Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut.” The introduction to their study explains:

The relationship between the socioeconomic status of an individual or social group and various other social and economic phenomena has been clearly demonstrated in numerous sociological studies. Socioeconomic status has been shown to be closely related to such varied phenomena as childbearing attitudes, family stability, political behavior, physical and mental health, housing conditions, community participation and so forth. Thus, socioeconomic status is a valuable indicator of the characteristics of an individual or group which can be useful for policy formation and socioeconomic planning.

The importance of socioeconomic variables in determining life styles and life chances has been further emphasized by the fact that they are not limited to individuals or family groups, but are useful also in the analysis of larger geographical units. ,,,,,,,,,,

The socioeconomic status of an area may be used as an indicator of a number of trends such as:

- (1) the basic processes of population change (fertility, mortality and migration);
- (2) social service needs and facilities; and
- (3) various compositional features of the area's population such as labor force experience, household living arrangements, scholastic attainment, health care practices, resource development, etc. Socioeconomic index scores are a useful indicator since they can be correlated to other social and economic phenomena in the analysis of social change.

Using data from the 1980 US Census, Groff and Braden developed three metrics:

- **Occupation**: The percentage of employed persons 16 years of age and over who were working at blue-collar occupations (craftsmen, operators, or non-farm laborers).
- **Education**: The percentage of the population age 25 years and over who had completed less than four years of high school.
- **Income**: The percentage of workers who earn below \$7,500 per year.

They then used a statistical techniques to modify the metrics so that higher scores mean better performance. From that, they developed another statistical technique to turn those metrics into “standardized scores”. Finally, the three metrics were then integrated into a single metric of overall socioeconomic status, which would be applied to each town. A detailed explanation of these statistical techniques is beyond the scope of this article. It is fair to say that one would need an advanced degree in the field of statistics to understand them. To learn more about these statistical techniques, read Groff and Braden’s report.

The list of scores that they developed for each of the 169 towns in the state of Connecticut is found below in Table 1.

The “non-technical” reader, however, should not just take the validity of such measures on faith. A good way to evaluate the goodness (validity) of the metric is to do some checks to see if the resulting scores have “face validity”. In other words, do the scores that the various towns received seem reasonable. An informal way to do that is the to pick a set of about five Connecticut towns which the reader feels confident that he can list in order from the highest (best) to the lowest (worst). Then, note the score given for each in Table 1. If Groff and Braden’s scores are in the order predicted, then the reader should have confidence in the metrics used. The reader can make more such lists and check to see if Groff and Braden’s results match theirs.

Another method of judging the face validity of Groff and Braden’s metric is to just study the rank-ordered list of Connecticut towns from 1 to 169, and see if the list looks “right”.

Below is Groff and Braden’s Table 1. The town names are listed on the left, starting with New Caanan, which got the highest SES score of all Connecticut towns and cities. Next you see the Occupation, Education and Income scores, which are

close to 100, which would be a perfect score. Then you see the SES Index score of 97.9, which is the highest composite SES score that was given. To the right of that, you see a 1, which is its 1980 rank. Then you see a 1970 SES score and then a 1960 SES score. You can see that New Caanan ranked 6th in 1960 and 1970 and jumped to number 1 in 1980.

As you go down the list, you see all the scores decrease. You will see that Windsor Locks ranked 111 out of 169 in 1980. In 1970, it ranked 81, and in 1960, it ranked 63. Windsor Locks suffered a massive downward slide. The scores for Occupation, Education and Income are only given for 1980. Since there are 169 towns and cities, the halfway point was about 85, and the three-quarter point was at 127. So, about three quarters of the towns and cities of Connecticut ranked above Windsor Locks in 1980. The lowest ranked city or town on this Socioeconomic Status scale was Hartford.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

TOWN	1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100-Standardized Percentile Score)			Socioeconomic Index Scores	1980 Rank	1970 Rank	1960 Rank
	Occupation	Education	Income				
New Canaan	99.9	94.1	99.4	97.9	1	6	6
Weston	97.7	99.9	95.0	97.6	2	1	5
Wilton	91.2	98.9	100.0	96.7	3	5	8
Simsbury	91.3	95.7	96.8	94.7	4	3	10
Westport	95.3	93.0	91.2	93.2	5	4	4
Darien	90.9	91.8	95.7	92.9	6	2	1
Redding	87.2	92.4	98.2	92.7	7	7	15
Woodbridge	92.8	87.5	97.5	92.6	8	9	7
Avon	91.0	91.3	91.3	91.2	9	17	18
Ridgefield	85.8	92.1	90.3	89.5	10	8	31
Madison	80.4	94.0	87.8	87.5	11	12	28
Easton	85.9	81.8	90.2	86.0	12	25	2
Sherman	72.6	89.7	92.5	85.0	13	33	69
Orange	80.7	80.1	93.9	85.0	14	10	13
Greenwich	87.1	75.0	90.7	84.3	15	20	14
Glastonbury	79.6	82.3	88.0	83.3	16	15	21
Bridgewater	71.1	79.9	98.0	83.0	17	28	92
West Hartford	87.5	74.3	86.2	82.7	18	11	5
East Granby	75.8	74.3	96.9	82.4	19	21	34
Granby	71.7	77.7	96.0	81.9	20	14	20
Farmington	75.4	76.5	93.5	81.9	21	27	24
Woodbury	65.7	82.6	97.1	81.8	22	39	38
Cheshire	74.4	78.8	92.0	81.8	23	16	12
Brookfield	70.8	83.1	91.0	81.7	24	19	11
Canton	69.6	81.9	89.3	80.3	25	30	41
Guilford	70.2	81.7	88.5	80.2	26	38	77
Salisbury	85.3	73.5	81.3	80.1	27	46	33
Newtown	69.5	76.6	92.1	79.5	28	41	42
Burlington	59.7	81.5	94.8	78.7	29	103	70
Mansfield	83.8	79.3	72.4	78.6	30	52	104
Roxbury	68.5	85.6	80.9	78.4	31	48	25
Marlborough	73.4	76.2	85.0	78.2	32	32	62
South Windsor	64.4	73.0	95.8	77.8	33	35	37

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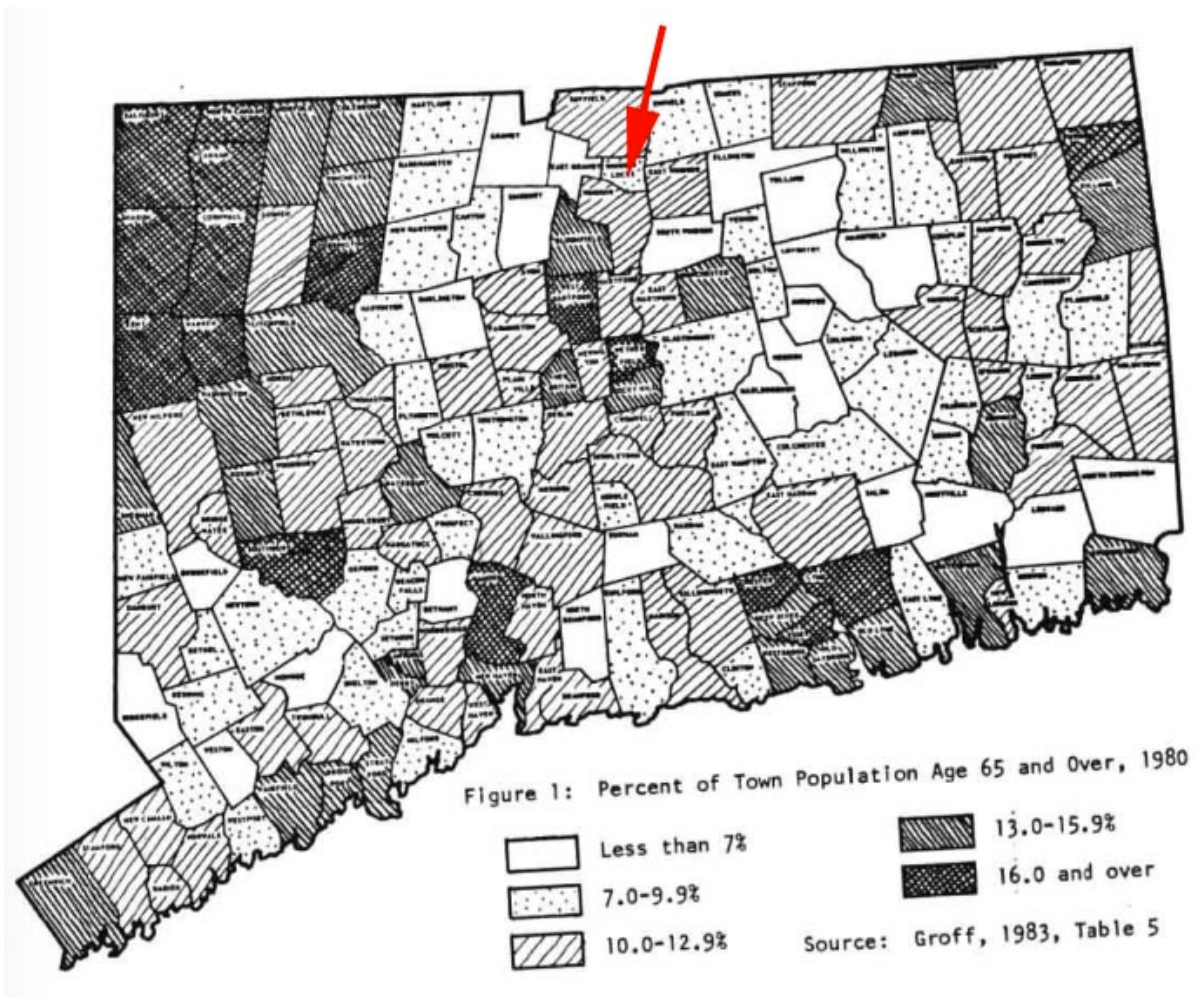
Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

TOWN	1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100-Standardized Percentile Score)			Socioeconomic Index Scores	1980 Rank	1970 Rank	1960 Rank
	Occupation	Education	Income				
Bethany	65.6	78.8	87.7	77.4	34	13	19
Tolland	61.9	75.8	93.7	77.2	35	80	117
Trumbull	71.6	66.2	93.2	77.1	36	29	27
Old Lyme	61.2	81.4	87.5	76.7	37	53	93
Ledyard	61.0	83.7	85.2	76.7	38	31	74
East Lyme	64.5	75.8	88.3	76.2	39	65	65
Bloomfield	73.2	64.4	90.3	76.0	40	26	16
Fairfield	72.7	66.0	88.4	75.7	41	36	30
Rocky Hill	77.8	57.8	90.8	75.5	42	63	23
Lyme	62.7	82.2	80.0	75.0	43	49	79
Bolton	60.3	73.5	90.8	74.9	44	56	32
Hebron	59.3	75.6	89.6	74.9	45	55	122
Monroe	53.8	72.8	97.0	74.6	46	40	64
Middlebury	66.8	68.4	87.4	74.2	47	47	52
Washington	62.9	72.8	86.5	74.1	48	60	35
Wethersfield	75.5	57.2	86.3	73.0	49	18	9
Andover	49.1	71.1	96.5	72.3	50	23	50
Columbia	52.4	74.4	89.8	72.3	51	62	75
Newington	69.1	57.6	89.8	72.2	52	34	17
New Fairfield	65.2	69.0	82.0	72.2	53	74	46
Warren	53.2	75.2	85.6	71.4	54	79	140
Windsor	68.7	60.9	83.7	71.2	55	50	44
Southbury	64.8	56.8	91.7	71.1	56	147	163
Ellington	53.3	63.3	96.1	70.9	57	70	110
Killingworth	52.6	69.9	89.7	70.8	58	76	68
Bethlehem	61.1	73.6	76.9	70.6	59	67	53
Bethel	58.1	67.8	85.3	70.5	60	73	81
Essex	50.9	69.2	91.1	70.4	61	84	78
Barkhamsted	54.2	68.0	88.4	70.3	62	22	55
Suffield	56.7	66.2	87.4	70.2	63	42	98
Durham	54.3	69.2	86.4	70.0	64	51	49
Hartland	41.8	70.7	97.2	70.0	65	61	96
Manchester	63.8	56.6	87.0	69.2	66	64	39
Cromwell	62.9	62.5	80.1	68.5	67	96	84
New Hartford	51.9	64.6	88.7	68.4	68	97	139
Kent	63.6	67.5	74.1	68.4	69	43	58
Coventry	51.8	67.8	85.1	68.3	70	105	124
Hampton	57.9	62.4	84.2	68.2	71	68	166
Pomfret	65.5	58.3	80.4	68.1	72	94	107
Willington	64.3	59.1	80.7	68.1	73	111	76
Hamden	69.6	56.8	77.5	68.0	74	59	22
Branford	60.3	66.3	77.0	67.9	75	58	57
North Haven	57.9	54.3	89.9	67.4	76	44	26
Somers	62.0	61.7	78.0	67.3	77	37	103
Clinton	53.8	67.8	79.3	67.0	78	69	102
Ashford	60.3	65.1	72.8	66.1	79	122	135
Eastford	56.6	56.1	85.3	66.0	80	108	71
East Hampton	47.1	63.5	87.0	65.9	81	145	66
Cornwall	48.5	64.3	83.3	65.4	82	54	100
Old Saybrook	52.4	66.8	76.7	65.3	83	24	95
Litchfield	47.0	58.6	90.1	65.3	84	91	47
New Milford	46.2	63.0	85.0	64.8	85	89	82
Stamford	69.5	52.3	71.7	64.5	86	75	56
Waterford	53.9	57.2	80.9	64.1	87	85	45
Woodstock	56.5	56.7	77.8	63.7	88	106	106
Berlin	50.7	49.7	90.5	63.7	89	82	51
Westbrook	48.5	64.3	77.8	63.6	90	107	125
Haddam	45.3	61.8	82.9	63.4	91	71	99
Portland	55.9	56.7	77.3	63.4	92	88	73
Milford	47.0	56.3	86.2	63.2	93	72	43
Croton	52.5	67.7	69.0	63.1	94	138	59
North Branford	44.9	59.5	83.8	62.8	95	45	29
Shelton	46.0	54.3	85.3	61.9	96	112	129
Colebrook	36.5	65.1	79.6	60.4	97	87	165
Oxford	35.5	59.6	85.8	60.4	98	98	118
Morris	42.1	56.3	82.3	60.3	99	124	40
Goshen	47.6	60.1	71.1	59.7	100	133	54
Sharon	53.5	62.6	62.5	59.5	101	57	67
Norwalk	59.6	45.1	73.3	59.4	102	109	60
Wallingford	42.8	49.8	85.1	59.3	103	99	83
Enfield	44.2	49.4	83.8	59.2	104	86	87
Vernon	53.3	51.9	72.1	59.1	105	95	85

Table 1: Socioeconomic Index Scores for Connecticut Towns: 1980.

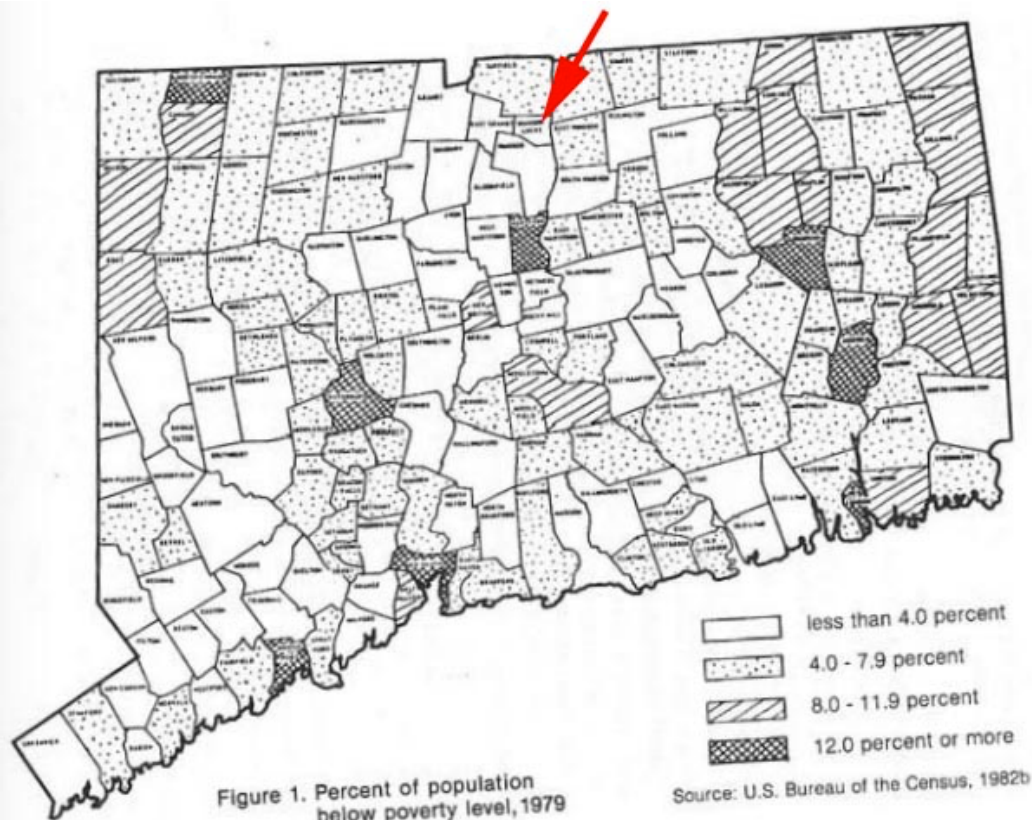
TOWN	1980 Modified Standardized Scores (100-Standardized Percentile Score)			Socioeconomic Index Scores	1980 Rank	1970 Rank	1960 Rank
	Occupation	Education	Income				
Meriden	47.8	62.1	66.0	58.7	107	114	152
Middlefield	43.9	46.8	84.5	58.5	108	102	48
North Stonington	34.7	58.4	81.3	58.2	109	92	91
Colchester	41.6	50.2	82.3	58.1	110	125	150
Windsor Locks	43.7	45.5	83.3	57.5	111	81	63
Chester	28.3	54.5	88.9	57.3	112	113	137
Franklin	49.8	61.1	60.8	57.3	113	78	90
Watertown	45.0	46.6	79.9	57.2	114	119	109
Southington	40.2	45.6	85.6	57.2	115	120	112
Norfolk	48.9	48.2	73.7	57.0	116	116	72
East Haddam	36.7	51.0	81.7	56.5	117	130	141
Preston	53.2	28.5	87.5	56.4	118	93	155
Bozrah	38.2	51.8	79.2	56.4	119	134	133
Canaan	47.2	52.1	69.8	56.4	120	66	127
Harwinton	32.4	53.8	81.8	56.0	121	100	94
Stonington	40.5	49.0	78.1	55.9	122	139	128
Prospect	43.4	46.1	77.8	55.8	123	77	88
Stratford	50.2	40.1	76.6	55.7	124	104	80
Seymour	35.8	49.9	76.4	54.1	125	126	136
East Windsor	38.4	42.9	78.8	53.4	126	117	121
Beacon Falls	33.6	43.2	81.8	52.9	127	143	131
North Canaan	39.7	59.1	59.6	52.9	128	90	147
Danbury	43.8	40.1	73.4	52.5	129	132	120
East Hartford	48.1	37.2	70.7	52.0	130	83	61
Scotland	36.4	51.2	65.2	51.0	131	121	89
Plainville	31.3	30.2	88.9	50.2	132	131	115
Wolcott	28.1	39.9	82.2	50.1	133	110	101
Middletown	48.5	31.9	69.4	50.0	134	128	114
Montville	32.6	45.3	71.7	49.9	135	101	132
Canterbury	20.9	44.2	81.5	48.9	136	152	169
Lisbon	33.9	35.7	73.3	47.7	137	153	113
Union	40.0	40.0	61.7	47.3	138	169	36
Deep River	24.0	45.4	71.5	47.0	139	127	116
Chaplin	34.7	41.2	63.0	46.3	140	136	126
West Haven	48.3	33.6	55.6	45.8	141	118	86
Thomaston	17.2	38.3	80.3	45.3	142	141	134
East Haven	35.8	25.5	72.7	44.7	143	123	97
Bristol	27.1	29.7	76.4	44.5	144	135	130
Naugatuck	25.7	31.8	72.0	43.2	145	137	123
Meriden	32.9	25.8	70.3	43.1	146	140	119
Ansonia	31.9	30.1	66.5	42.9	147	148	157
Brooklyn	30.6	34.8	61.8	42.5	148	160	162
Voluntown	25.5	26.9	68.7	40.4	149	156	108
Stafford	21.7	28.1	70.0	40.0	150	146	156
Winchester	20.6	25.7	73.4	40.0	151	129	161
Plymouth	12.3	25.6	81.5	39.9	152	151	151
Derby	31.5	21.7	65.7	39.7	153	150	145
Torrington	28.1	18.7	68.2	38.4	154	157	143
Sprague	28.1	26.1	59.1	37.8	155	168	160
Norwich	38.9	23.9	49.8	37.6	156	154	142
New London	51.3	27.8	31.0	36.8	157	144	111
Windham	46.7	15.9	47.3	36.7	158	149	148
New Britain	34.2	12.8	55.4	34.2	159	162	146
Putnam	24.8	5.1	60.5	30.2	160	167	154
Thompson	17.2	11.8	61.1	30.1	161	163	164
New Haven	53.4	24.8	8.5	29.0	162	159	144
Waterbury	28.1	11.9	42.9	27.7	163	155	153
Killingly	16.5	8.9	56.2	27.2	164	166	158
Plainfield	8.3	4.3	58.4	23.7	165	165	167
Griswold	12.7	0.0	57.3	23.4	166	158	159
Sterling	.0	3.3	53.3	18.9	167	142	168
Bridgeport	29.2	1.2	23.0	17.8	168	161	149
Hartford	50.6	1.3	0.0	17.3	169	164	138

The three aspects of socioeconomic status that we have looked at are: income, education and occupation. There is another aspect that deserves mention here, and that is the elderly. The elderly have a distinct effect on socioeconomic status. They have less income. They have less of a tendency to move since they are no longer chasing jobs. The percentage of elderly in a community has an effect on the “feel” of the community. The following chart is by Kenneth Haddon, who was a researcher at the University of Connecticut along with William Groff and Robert Braden. It is interesting to see the distribution of the elderly across Connecticut. You will see that Windsor Locks had one of the lowest percentages of elderly of Connecticut towns (between 7% and 10%.) The arrow points to Windsor Locks.



The last chart we shall look at is the rates of poverty across Connecticut. It was in another study by Kenneth Haddon. Again, the arrow points to Windsor Locks. It is very interesting to see that the poverty rate in Windsor Locks was one of the lowest in Connecticut when the study was done in 1979.

Less than 4% of the population of Windsor Locks were listed as living in poverty, in a town that ranked 111 out of 169 in socioeconomic status. That is very low.



Windsor Locks has a very low percentage of older citizens, and it has a very low percentage of very poor people. Earlier in the chapter we saw that the rich business owners of the mills left town as the mills collapsed, and the tremendous expansion of the population in the 1950s was coped with by the building up of middle-class housing from West Street to Bradley Field. That leads to the conclusion that Windsor Locks has a “very” middle class population.

Conclusions

We began by describing the concept of Socioeconomic Status (SES), and its implications. Two researchers at the University of Connecticut, William Groff and Robert Braden (1983) wrote a paper which ranked all 169 towns and cities of Connecticut on the three components of Socioeconomic Status, Occupation, Education and Income. They also gave an overall SES rank to each city and town, not only for 1980, but also for 1970 and 1960. This set of statistics provides not only a ranking for each of the towns and cities, but also shows the direction in which each town is moving.

Windsor Locks underwent a massive change in the 1950s and 60s with a massive influx of people. It went through another massive change in the 1960s and 70s with the re-development of Main Street, which eliminated both the business district of Windsor Locks, and the large set of low-cost rental rooms and apartments in that area. Nearly 20% of the population of Windsor Locks left town in the 1970s. Given all of this

change, it seemed reasonable to try to get a handle on what the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks was in the 1980s, and to see how it changed from the 1960s and 70s. The purpose of this article was to study the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks in that timeframe. The Groff and Braden study provided an excellent statistical analysis of three US censuses to do this. Two other studies from the University of Connecticut provided supporting data on the percentages of elderly and of those living in poverty in Windsor Locks.

Windsor Locks ranked 111th in 1980 with an overall SES score of 57.5. While that sounds low, it is helpful to quickly scan all of the 1980 SES scores in the list, especially the ones which are in the middle of the list (scores of around 50). One will see that the scores in the middle of the list are tightly bunched. In statistical terms, the distribution is said to have a small “standard deviation”. Groff and Braden were careful to say that not too much should be read into these rankings. Their words were: “the socioeconomic index scores and the resulting social rank areas should be viewed as indicators and not as definitive measures of socioeconomic status.”

For Windsor Locks to score in the bottom half of Connecticut towns on socioeconomic measures should not be a surprise. Windsor Locks has always been a “blue collar town”. When the large expansion of its population occurred in the 1950s and 60s, the houses that were built were modest homes, not mansions. Windsor Locks’ low tax rate and modest houses were not geared to attracting wealthy people. Avon, which ranked number 9 in 1980, had implemented an Architectural Control Board, which is a costly and intrusive way of keeping existing structures in excellent shape, and of insuring that new structures meet the highest standards. While Avon’s approach has worked, it took a long time to do it, and it came at a cost. Not all towns are willing or even interested in paying that price. It is not surprising that Avon would rank high on a socioeconomic scale. It is not unexpected that Hartford would rank low. It came in last. Overall, the placement of most of the towns seems to have good “face validity”.

One can find other evidence to support the validity of the Groff and Braden SES rankings. The Groff and Braden study is now (2016) more than a quarter of a century old. There is a recent Wikipedia article which ranks the towns and cities of Connecticut by average annual income in 2013. The following chart shows the top 15 towns and cities, and it also shows where the top 15 towns on the 2013 Wikipedia list are on the 1983 Groff and Braden list. Overall, those 17 towns and cities show the rankings by both studies are reasonably close. In fact, they are surprisingly close, given that they were done 30 years apart and that they used different metrics. A look at the entire Wikipedia list of 2013 shows a good correlation with the Groff and Braden rankings.

2013 Wikipedia list		1983 Groff and Braden List
1	New Canaan	1
2	Darien	6
3	Greenwich	15
4	Weston	2
5	Westport	5
6	Wilton	3
7	Ridgefield	10
8	Glastonbury	16

9	Redding	7
10	Roxbury	31
11	Lyme	43
12	Easton	12
13	Bridgewater	17
14	Essex	61
15	Avon	9
136	Windsor Locks	111
Last	Hartford	Last

Given that the ranking of Windsor Locks in socioeconomic status has remained consistent between the Geoff and Braden study and the Wikipedia listing of 2013, the town does not seem to be moving up or down in the intervening years.

One could ask what could be done to lift the socioeconomic status of Windsor Locks. The simple answer is to increase the average income of its residents. This is not an easy task, and it would take a lot of time. The answer is also in the realm of politics, that is, in making changes for the future, which is not a part of this chapter or this book. This chapter and this book have taken a backward look, that is, a look at history. That provides as good a basis as possible for those who are interested in making change in the future.

The studies performed at the University of Connecticut are virtually unknown in Windsor Locks. One goal of this study was to make their work visible to more of people of Windsor Locks.

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Chapter 37

Why did the Population of Windsor Locks Drop by 20% in the 1970s?

Introduction

What could cause 20% of the population of Windsor Locks to leave town in a single decade (1970-1980)? Prior to the 1970s, Windsor Locks never had a decade in which its population decreased. On the right is a chart of the town's population by decade, as found in Wikipedia. It shows that the population decreased by 19.2% from 1970 to 1980. The Groff study at the University of Connecticut found that the population of Windsor Locks dropped by 3,314 persons in that decade. The purpose of this article is to try to understand why this happened.

The issue of the population decrease of the 1970s came up while researching the demise of Windsor Locks' old Main Street. Around 1900, there were about a dozen factories operating along the canal, which employed hundreds of workers. There was a long line of retail shops on the other side of Main Street which was the business center of the town. While the number of factories had been decreasing slowly from 1900 to 1980, the retail side of Main St was eliminated all at once, by a process known as the "Re-development of Main Street". All of the businesses were bought by the town in the 1960s, and they were demolished in the 1970s. The plan was that new businesses would come in and replace the old ones. That never happened. To someone researching the demise of both sides of Main St, which culminated in the late 1970s, it seemed possible that the loss of jobs, the loss of the low-cost rental housing units in the area, and the loss of the town's only shopping area, might have been the causes of a population decrease in the decade of the 1970s. That hypothesis resulted in this article.

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1860	1,587	—
1870	2,154	35.7%
1880	2,332	8.3%
1890	2,758	18.3%
1900	3,062	11.0%
1910	3,715	21.3%
1920	3,554	−4.3%
1930	4,073	14.6%
1940	4,347	6.7%
1950	5,221	20.1%
1960	11,411	118.6%
1970	15,080	32.2%
1980	12,190	−19.2%
1990	12,358	1.4%
2000	12,043	−2.5%
2010	12,498	3.8%
Est. 2014	12,565 ^[3]	0.5%
U.S. Decennial Census ^[4]		

Hypothesizing possible causes for the population decrease of the 1970s

The first step in analyzing the population decrease of the 1970s was to ask citizens of Windsor Locks to come up with a list of possible causes. This was done by posting the question on two Windsor Locks Facebook pages. One is called: “You know you are from Windsor Locks when”. The other website is the Windsor Locks History Society page on Facebook. Members of both groups hypothesized causes of the 20% population decrease. That discussion showed that there was little, if any, awareness that such a population drop had occurred. However, discussion on both websites was active, indicating that there was a good deal of interest in this topic. Following is a list of the hypothesized causes, in no particular order:

1. The cost of housing was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.
2. Baby-Boomers left in the 1970s either for college or for the war in Vietnam, and did not return.
3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join counter-culture movements.
4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.
5. The re-development of Main Street destroyed many low-cost rental housing units to be eliminated.
6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal was decreasing.
7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused people to leave town.
8. Route 91 was built in that timeframe which allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from their workplace.

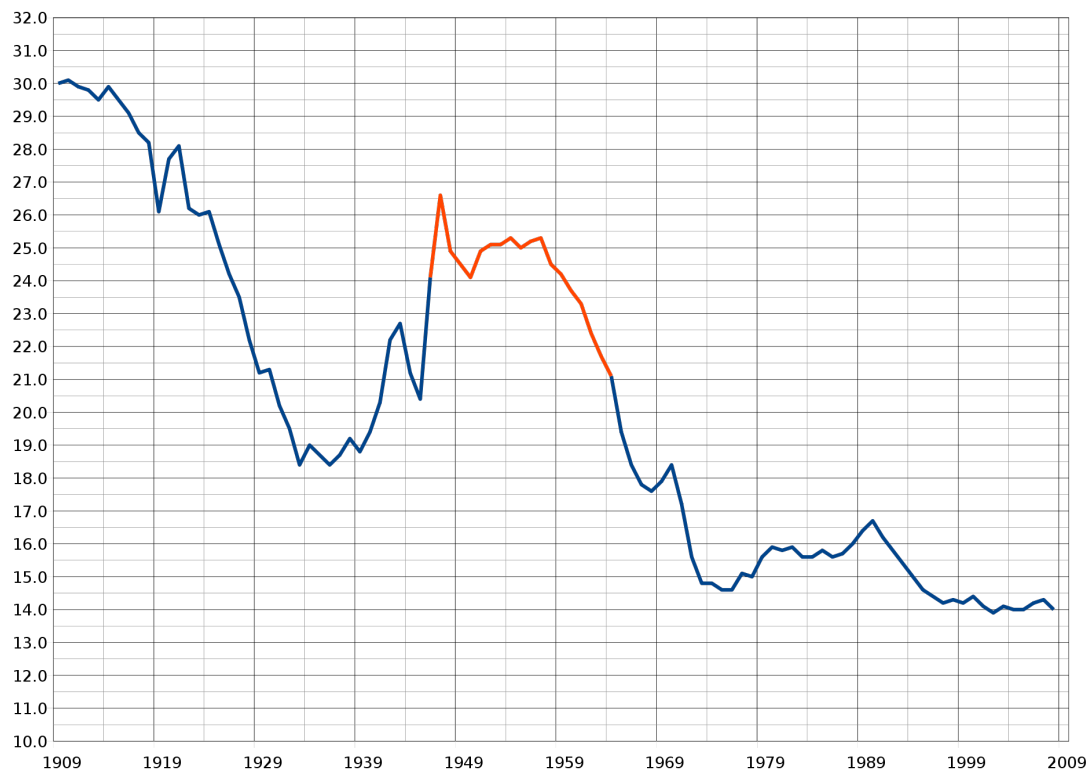
Eight possible causes of the reduction of the population of Windsor Locks in the 1970s have been developed. The first two hypothesized causes of the population decline in Windsor Locks in the 1970s involve the concept of the “The Baby Boomer Generation”. Therefore we will briefly examine the Baby Boom phenomenon before examining the hypothesized causes of the population decline.

The Baby-Boomer Generation

Baby boomers were born in the post–World War II baby boom, between the years 1946 and 1964. The term "baby boomer" is also used in a cultural context. See the graph below, which is from the Wikipedia article on the Baby Boomers.

This graph shows the United States birth rate (births per 1000 people). The red segment from 1946 to 1964 is the postwar baby boom, with birth rates starting to drop around 1960.

The boomers experienced things like: the draft, the Vietnam war, the birth of Rock and Roll, the Beatniks, the Cold War, the Red Scare, the anti-war movement, the Hippie “Free Love” movement, Jane Fonda, Woodstock, and the deaths of Martin Luther King, President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy.



The counter-culture movements encompassed far more freedom and individualism than previous generations had known. One did not have to be in San Francisco, or on a college campus to see and feel this cultural change. The baby-boomers grew up watching it on television. There was daily exposure to anti-war protests, social experimentation, sexual freedom, drug experimentation, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, women's movement, the protests and riots, and Woodstock. According to the Wikipedia article:

“In 1993, Time magazine reported on the religious affiliations of baby boomers. Citing Wade Clark Roof, a sociologist at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the articles stated that about 42% of baby boomers were dropouts from formal religion, 33% had never strayed from church, and 25% of boomers were returning to religious practice. The boomers returning to religion were “usually less tied to tradition and less

dependable as church members than the loyalists. They are also more liberal, which deepens rifts over issues like abortion and homosexuality”."

Boomers grew up at a time of dramatic social change. Many saw it as a time of decline of traditional family values and of traditional standards of morality. Not everyone was captured by this, but everyone experienced it. It left an indelible mark on the United States. When asked about the population decline of the 1970s, a number of people from Windsor Locks emphasized negative social aspects of the Baby-Boomer generation. Now we look at the eight hypotheses, and see if the boomers had an effect.

Analysis of the eight hypothesized causes of the 20% population reduction in Windsor Locks in the 1970s

1. The cost of housing was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.

In the Facebook discussion of the causes of the 1970s population drop, a number of individuals discussed their own experiences in having to leave Windsor Locks to find housing they could afford in nearby towns. Windsor Locks had massive increases in population in both the 1950s and the 1960s. The chart of page 1 of this article show that the 1950s increase was 120% and the 1960s increase was 32%. The only way for the town to cope with this influx of people was to build many housing developments. By the 1970s, so many houses had been built in Windsor Locks, that there was little room to build more houses. Prices were high because of the increased demand for houses and the low supply. The high cost of housing does seem to be a major cause of the 1970s population decline.

2. Baby-Boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War in the 1970s and did not return.

The Baby-Boomers were born in the midst of post World War prosperity. Businesses were growing. Jobs were plentiful. There was a feeling of prosperity. There was a feeling that if one worked hard, good things would happen. There was a focus on getting one's children educated. Many Windsor Locks Baby-Boomers were going off to college in the 1970s, and many of them did not return to Windsor Locks after graduating. In both the 1960s and 1970s, young men from Windsor Locks joined the military, but didn't return to live in Windsor Locks.

Lacking statistics on the number of people from Windsor Locks who went to college or to the military in the 1970s and didn't return, the best we can do is to develop a reasonable estimate. Windsor Locks High School's biggest graduation classes occurred in the 1970s, when they got up to about 300. Let's assume that in the 1970s, there were ten graduating classes of 300 each (probably a high estimate), for a total of 3000 graduates during that decade. For the sake of argument, let's say that half of them went either to college or to the military, but did not return to Windsor Locks to live there. That would be about 1500. That would account for a little less than half of the population drop of 3314 in that decade. That would make it a significant factor in the population drop of that decade.

It is important to note that some of these eight hypothesized causes of the population drop overlap one another. For example, the first factor was that people left because the cost of housing was higher than they could afford. That could be the same reason that some of the college students and military did not return to Windsor Locks.

3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join a counter-culture movement.

This was brought up by some Windsor Locks residents in the Facebook discussion on possible causes for the population reduction in the 1970s. Each worded it slightly differently. One said young adults might have left town to become hippies and live the counterculture life. Another said that family values were decreasing in the 1970s. Another said that families began to let houses begin to deteriorate in Windsor Locks in the 1970s. No one could name a specific person who left town to join a counterculture movement. Therefore we can conclude that this was not a major contributor to the population decline of the 1970s. If any did leave Windsor Locks to become hippies during the 1970s, they probably couldn't afford to buy a house in Windsor Locks when they returned. Hippies didn't make a lot of money.

4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.

Anyone in the field of Aerospace in the 1970s knows that it was an exceptionally difficult decade for aerospace companies, especially those involved in defense contracts. The author of this article started his aerospace career in January of 1970, and worked for three companies which had layoffs in the 1970s. Those who worked for Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks went through layoffs as well as hiring sprees in the 1970s. It is likely that some families that owned houses could not remain in Windsor Locks after being laid off, but no statistics on this could be found. We shall see more evidence on this later in this article.

5. The re-development of Main Street caused many low-cost rental-housing units to be eliminated.

The re-development of Main Street involved the town buying all of the retail businesses on Main Street and the buildings behind them in the 1960s, and the destruction of those buildings in the 1970s. Those buildings held two types of businesses: retail stores and rental housing. The side-by-side photos below show Main Street before and after re-development.

The re-development of Main Street involved the town buying all of the retail businesses on Main Street and the buildings behind them in the 1960s, and the destruction of those buildings in the 1970s. Those buildings held two types of businesses: retail stores and rental housing. The side-by-side photos below show Main Street before and after re-development.

Looking at these two photos, it is easy to notice that the retail businesses are gone. What is far less noticeable is the fact that a massive number of low-rent rooms and apartments that were also destroyed. Many were on Main Street, above the stores



Main Street in the 1960s



Main Street in the 1980s

and restaurants. Examples are the apartments that were above Shonty's Bar and Grill and Bianchi's Restaurant. This entire block was owned by Moses Goldfarb, and included the rooming house on the driveway between Mr. Goldfarb's block and Vito Colapietro's hotel. As you continued up the driveway, there were two more four-plexes before you got the automotive repair garage at the top of the driveway. Behind Mr. Goldfarb's block, there was the building that once housed the Preli Italian market. That building also had rental housing, as did other buildings near it. The same was true all along Main Street, from Church Street as far north as far as Grove St. There were many buildings that were subdivided into apartments behind the row of retail stores along Main Street. There were still people living in Coly's Hotel. They were not transients. They resided at the hotel. The following photo pair shows the density of buildings in 1934 (before re-development) and 2016 (after re-development).



1934

Downtown Windsor Locks

2016

My brother, Lenny Montemerlo, who spent a good deal of his career as a developer, made me aware of this large number of rental housing units in downtown Windsor Locks that were destroyed along with the retail stores. I asked him to roughly estimate the number of people who were displaced by the re-development. He went through a block by block analysis, and came up with 500 people as a rough order of magnitude. Further, he said, that these were the lowest-priced rental units in Windsor Locks. Those who were displaced from these units would not have been able to find other places to live in town that they could afford. He estimated that virtually all of them had to leave town to find housing they could afford.

Interestingly enough, the loss of all of the retail businesses did not cause many to leave town. Swede's Jewelers moved to Warehouse Point, and the Marconi Brothers' Luncheonette moved to Suffield. The Donut Kettle and an insurance office moved to other locations in Windsor Locks. The rest of the stores went out of business. The number of stores that went out of business is not known, but we can estimate that it was about fifty. They were mostly family owned and operated. Even Coly's Hotel only had one person in charge (Vito Colapietro) and one employee (Vito's son, John Colapietro). One can estimate that the number of jobs lost might have been as high as 100. One could estimate that possibly half of those moved out of town. Thus we can reasonably estimate that the total number of people who moved out of Windsor Locks because of the re-development of Main Street in the 1970s was between 500 and 600. Since we know from the Census data that 3314 move out of town in the decade of the 1970s, it is reasonable to conclude that the re-development project was responsible for about a sixth of the out-migration. In other words, it was a significant cause of the population decline in that decade.

6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal were decreasing.

In the last half of the 1800s, and the early 1900s, the factories along the canal were the largest source of non-agricultural jobs in Windsor Locks. However in the 1900s, the number of operating factories dropped slowly and steadily. By 1980, there were only two factories still in operation. The following chart is from Chapter 33. "The Rise and Fall of the Canal and the Factories Along the Canal," by Mel Montemerlo.

This chart shows when factory at each site was operating. One can see that there were three operating in 1970 and there were still three operating in 1980. That means that there was no large drop in factory jobs in the decade of the 1970s. Therefore we can conclude that the drop in Windsor Locks population in that decade was not due to a loss of jobs in the factories by the canal.


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.....1810 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 1900 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 2000
Site
1          xxxxxxxx
2          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
3          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
4          xxxxxxxxxx
5          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
6          xxxx
6a         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
6b         xxxxxxxx
7          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
8          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
9          xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
10         xxxxxxxx
11         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
12         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
13         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
14         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
15         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
16         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
17         xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused townspeople to move elsewhere.

This hypothesized cause of the population drop in the 1970s is impervious to quantification. Based on the informal discussions that led to the writing of this article, no-one knew anyone who left town because they were that unhappy with the redevelopment of Main Street. That discussion and many others on the websites mentioned at the beginning of this article, show that there are many people who are unhappy with the destruction of their beloved Main St.

That was a different time. Those were the days when many people in Windsor Locks walked to the A&P to buy their groceries, or walked to one of about four ethnic markets to buy groceries. Those were the days when people from surrounding towns came to Windsor Locks to do their shopping. Those were the days when people hung out at Wuzzy's (Marconi Brothers Luncheonette), or had a leisurely breakfast at the Donut Kettle, where everyone knew your name. Those were the days when you bought your TV at LaRussa's, and got your hardware at Bidwell's.

Earlier in this Chapter, there is a photo of the Main St. when it was in its heyday, and of the same place after re-development. The difference is obvious. However, that is not the whole story. It is true that many of those buildings on Main Street were not in good shape. There had been numerous fires. Syd's Modern Drug, Bidwell's, Blanche's Bowling Alley, and Shonty's burned down. Also, some of the businesses were not in good shape. While there are those who still have hard feelings about what happened, it is unlikely that anyone left Windsor Locks because re-development did not

go as planned, and their beloved “downtown” disappeared. So this hypothesized cause of the 1970s population drop turns out not to have been a factor.

8. Route 91 was built in a timeframe which allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from Springfield and Hartford.

The building of route 91 made it easier for people to commute longer distances to cities such as Hartford and Springfield to go work. Since housing was in short supply and housing prices were high in Windsor Locks in the 1970s, the availability of Route 91 made it easier for someone living in Windsor Locks to move to a more distant town to find cheaper housing. It may have been that young adults who were living with their parents but who were ready to get married and set up their own households, used the opportunity provided by Route 91 to buy a house in a more distant town in which housing was cheaper. We shall get more information on this later in this article.

Conclusion from the Analysis of Nine Hypothesized Causes of the Large 1970s Population Decrease in Windsor Locks

Our analysis of the eight hypothesized causes of the large population decrease in Windsor Locks in the 1970s divided them into two groups.

Group A: Analysis shows that the following were not significant factors. They were:

3. Lower family values caused Baby Boomers from Windsor Locks to leave town and join a counter-culture movement.
6. The number of jobs in the factories along the canal was decreasing.
7. The loss of the vibrant shopping area along Main Street lessened the feeling of civic pride, which caused people to leave town.

Group B: Analysis indicates that these were actual causes, but that there is not enough data to estimate the size of the effect. These were:

1. Housing cost was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns.
2. Baby boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War but never returned.
4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s.
5. The re-development of Main Street destroyed many low-cost rental housing units to be eliminated.
8. Route 91 allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus find lower cost housing at a longer distance from their workplace.

We made a list of possible causes of the 20% population drop in the 1970s. Then we analyzed each to determine if they were credible. The five in Group B are credible. However we haven't found the statistical evidence needed to identify the size of their effect on the population drop.

We shall now look at an excellent study, which used U. S. Census data from 1970 and 1980 to analyze the changing status of the populations of all Connecticut cities and towns during that decade. We shall examine that study to see if it can shed

any light on the five remaining hypothesized causes of Windsor Locks' population drop in the 1970s.

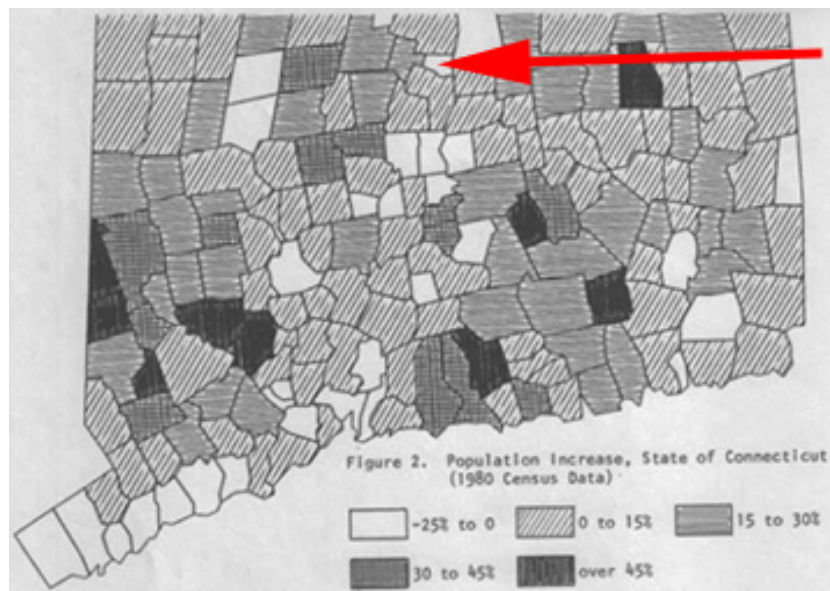
Data Analysis of Population Changes in Connecticut Towns and Cities in the 1970s

William H. Groff, of the University of Connecticut, wrote a report called "The Population of Connecticut: A Decade of Change, 1970 - 1980." The purpose of that report was to analyze the changes in population size and distribution during the 1970s.

Data from the 1970 and 1980 U. S. Censuses are provided for each town and city in Connecticut, which was then analyzed for trends. Here is the data that the study presents for the population change of Windsor Locks from 1970 to 1980.

Population in 1970	15,080	
Population in 1980	12,190	
1970 to 1980 change	- 2,890	
1970 to 1980 % change	- 19.2%	
Natural Increase	424	means 424 more births than deaths.
Net Migration	- 3,314	means 3,314 more people left than came.
1980 Migration Rate	- 219	means 219 persons per 1000 left the town.
1980 Population Density	1369.7	means 1936.7 persons per square mile.

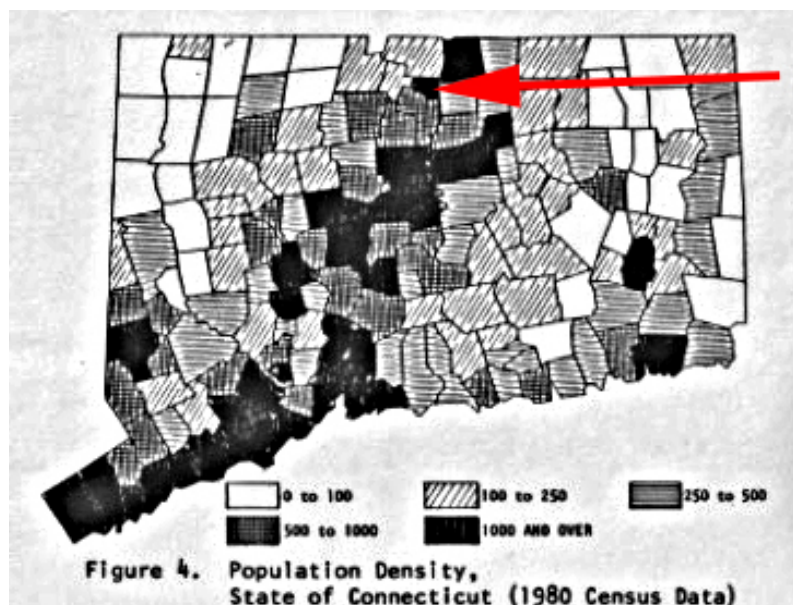
Two of Groff's charts are shown below. Figure 2 shows the population increases/decreases for the towns of Connecticut. The arrow points to the town of Windsor Locks. Notice that Windsor Locks is shaded in a white color. That means that



Groff's Figure 2 - Population Increases/Decreases in Connecticut towns.

Windsor Locks had a negative migration rate of between -25% and 0%. The darker each town is shaded, the greater its population increase. Notice that the towns whose populations decreased in that decade, which are shaded white, are in an arc from the lower left, which curves up the center of the state towards Windsor Locks.

Connecticut has eight counties which are divided into 169 towns and cities. Look at Groff's Figure 4, which is below. The arrow points to Windsor Locks, which is shaded Black, indicating a density of more than 1000 persons per square mile. Only 36 of Connecticut's 169 towns had population densities of more than 1000 persons per square mile. In 1980, Windsor Locks had a population density of 1369.7 persons per square mile. Only 29 of the towns and cities listed for Connecticut had a higher population density than Windsor Locks in 1980. While the cities of Connecticut had higher densities than Windsor Locks, not many of the towns did. This supports our Hypothesized Cause #1, that people were moving out of Windsor Locks because of the high cost of housing in a town with high population density, to find affordable housing in towns with lower population densities.



Groff's Figure 4 - Population Density of Connecticut towns.

Groff said that towns with industries having defense contracts experienced population decreases, probably as a result of fewer defense contracts. That addresses Windsor Locks, with its aerospace companies near Bradley Field. It provides support for our Hypothesized Cause #4, that the aerospace industry layoffs were a cause of people leaving Windsor Locks.

Geoff said: "The movement of people toward less densely settled areas has continued through the 1970s and is facilitated by the availability of the automobile and the state's highway System". This supports our Hypothesized Cause #8, that the new

availability of Route 91 allowed people to leave Windsor Locks to find lower cost housing which is farther from their work within reasonable commutes.

Groff concluded: "Many policy makers and demographers were surprised by the rather abrupt reversal of long-term trends in the 1970s. More Americans have been moving away from the more densely populated metropolitan centers to medium sized cities and rural areas, reversing the long term trend of growth in our larger cities."

Conclusions

We used a three step process to examine the causes of the 20% population decline that Windsor Locks had in the 1970s.

STEP 1: We began by hypothesizing eight possible causes of the 19.2% decline in Windsor Locks' population from 1970 to 1980.

STEP 2: By analyzing the nine hypothesized causes, we were able to determine that five of them probably had a significant role in the population drop of the 1970s, and that three of them could not have played a significant role in the population decline. However, we did not have data to determine the size of each's effect on the population decline.

STEP 3: We turned to the Groff study of the population changes in Connecticut towns and cities in the 1970s, which used United States Census data. Let's look at what Groff's study had to say about each of the four causes of population decline that our analysis supported.

1. Housing cost was higher in Windsor Locks than in nearby towns, which caused residents to find lower cost housing in other towns.

This was due to the high density of the population of Windsor Locks and the paucity of available housing at a reasonable cost. Groff found that all across Connecticut, people moved from towns with high population densities to those with low population densities.

2. Baby boomers left for college or for the Vietnam War but never returned.

Groff did not address the specifics of people who had gone to college or to the military and did not return to their home towns. He addressed the reasons that people did not stay in their town. The biggest reason, as we just saw, was that people were moving from high density towns to lower density towns to find housing that they could afford. It makes sense that if the people who went to college or to the military but didn't return, it is because they found employment elsewhere, or because they found more reasonably priced housing elsewhere. Thus, while Groff did not address this specifically, he provided indirect support for it.

4. Aerospace companies near Bradley Field had large layoffs in the 1970s, and those layoffs led people to move elsewhere to find work.

Groff found that towns with aerospace companies, especially those with military contracts had lost contracts in the 1970s which caused out-migration from those towns. Windsor Locks was such a town.

5. The re-development of Main Street destroyed many low-cost rental housing units, causing many to leave Windsor Locks.

While the closing of most of the stores didn't have a major effect on people leaving Windsor Locks in the 1970s, the loss of all of the room and apartment rental units with the lowest rental costs in town probably resulted in about 500 of the renters leaving town. Adding about 50 leaving because of the stores closing, the redevelopment project probably caused about a sixth of the net out-migration from Windsor Locks in the 1970s. Of course, this factor overlaps with the first factor - the higher cost of housing in Windsor Locks, which meant that the renters of the lowest-cost rooms and apartments could not find rentals in Windsor Locks that they could afford.

8. Route 91 was built in that timeframe and allowed people to commute longer distances, and thus they could find lower cost housing at a longer distance from Springfield and Hartford.

Groff found that the state's road system supported people who wanted to move out of higher cost areas to lower cost areas, because the Connecticut's road system, including the new I-95 permitted longer commutes.

Bottom Line: The data analysis of the Groff study provided the support needed for the five remaining hypothesized causes of Windsor Locks' 20% population decline in the 1970s which survived critical examination. The analysis of probable causes of the population decline has been successful.

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Chapter 38

Windsor Locks History Publications: An Annotated Bibliography

There are two books, two pamphlets and a photo book that address the history of Windsor Locks. Four of them are out of print, and two can only be found on the internet. These books are excellent resources for those who love Windsor Locks history. They have proven invaluable to me in writing 38 chapters on the history of the town. To help others find and use these books more efficiently, I have written this annotated bibliography, which consists of:

- a list of the books and pamphlets,
- information about what each contains, and
- information about the best way to obtain each of them.

With this background, one can make better decisions about which of these books to seek out. This annotated bibliography only covers books and pamphlets about the general history of Windsor Locks. It does not cover books which are specific to a given individual such as the biography of Dr. Carniglia, or a specific part of Windsor Locks, such as Bradley Field.

Each of those five history books and pamphlets will now be discussed.

“The History of Ancient Windsor” by Henry R. Stiles, MD

This is an authoritative book on the history of Windsor, which once contained what is now Windsor Locks. Please note that it is not a history of Windsor Locks, but a history of old Windsor, which preceded Windsor Locks. It has a very long title:

“The History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, including East Windsor, South Windsor, and Ellington, prior to 1768, the date of their separation from the old town, and Windsor, Bloomfield and Windsor Locks, to the present time, also the Genealogies and Genealogical Notes of those families which settled within the limits of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, prior to 1800.”

This was written by Henry R. Stiles, MD, of Brooklyn, NY, and it was published by Charles B. Norton in 1859. Reading the title of the book gives you an idea as to what the book contains.

This book was written by a medical doctor who was also an avid historian and genealogist. Some of his ancestors had lived in the town of Windsor, Conn, so he decided to write a highly detailed history of the early days of the town, including genealogies of many of its prominent residents. This is a very long book which is highly detailed. It contains three volumes, which have about 2,400 pages. This is not a book for the casual reader! Since Windsor Locks was incorporated in 1854, and the book was published in 1859, it does not cover much of the history of the town after it was

incorporated. It does have one chapter on Windsor Locks. This book, which is really about Windsor, does contain a “pre-history” of Windsor Locks.

Dr. Stiles was well acquainted with Windsor Locks historian, Jabez Haskell Hayden, who wrote the next book that is described in this article. There is a paragraph in Dr. Stiles’ book which is almost identical to a paragraph in Jabez Hayden Haskell’s book, which is described below. In neither book does this paragraph provide a reference to the other book as a source. Since Dr. Stiles’ book was written first, he must have been the author of that paragraph. In the introduction to his book, Dr. Stiles did say that he was a friend of Jabez Haskell Hayden, who he says was a serious historian, especially concerning the area of Windsor which later became Windsor Locks.

An electronic scan of the contents of Dr. Stiles’ book indicated that there are about twenty references to “Windsor Locks” in the book. Chapter 26 of the book is titled “Windsor Locks 1833-1859”. A search of the internet for this book shows that there were three volumes that made up the overall book: Volume 1, Volume 2 and the Supplement. These can be found at the following three web-pages:

<https://archive.org/details/historygenealogi01stil>

- is Volume 1 of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 2190

<https://archive.org/details/historygenealogi02stil>

- is Volume 2 of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 3293

<https://archive.org/details/historyofancient01stil>

- is the “Supplement” of the three volume set.
- Serial Number - 7112

These three volumes plus other editions of the book can be found on the following website, which gives the Serial Numbers of each of the volumes.

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=windsor%20locks%20history>

These three volumes can be read, searched and downloaded for free from this website. The ability to do word searches on long books such as this is invaluable. One can do a search in just a few seconds, while it would take weeks to read the 2,400 page, three volume set. Because of the detailed nature of its contents, and because it deals with the pre-history of Windsor Locks, these it is a very difficult book to read. Using the on-line book, one could find the 20 references to Windsor Locks in a matter of a few minutes. Having to read the three volumes to find the 20 references o Windsor Locks would literally take weeks.

“Historical Sketches” by Jabez Haskell Hayden

“Historical Sketches,” by Jabez Haskell Hayden, was published by the Windsor Locks Journal in Windsor Locks, CT, in 1900. It is the only existing book on the history of the town of Windsor Locks. It can be found, searched and downloaded for free at:

<https://archive.org/details/historicalsearch00hayd>

“Historical Sketches” is only about 130 pages, yet it covers a longer time period than Dr. Stiles’ 2,400 page book. Both start off in the early 1600s, but Stiles’ book was published in 1859, while Hayden’s book was published in 1900.

What is the difference between the two books besides length? Dr. Stiles book includes many documents and references to documents, and it also includes genealogies of early Windsor families. It is a highly detailed book. Mr. Hayden’s book is a set of “remembrances” by a man who loved Windsor Locks. He was a descendent of one of the earliest settlers in Pine Meadow. He wanted to write down what he learned from his father, his grandfather and other relatives. Such writings are often referred to as “oral history”. This book has long been out of print. Mr. Hayden’s book is much shorter than Mr. Stiles’s book, and it is less “dense”. Mr. Stiles book uses more of a scholastic approach, while Mr. Hayden’s book has a more conversational tone. The density of detail and extreme length of Mr. Stiles’ book renders it much more difficult to read than Mr. Hayden’s book.

Windsor Locks historian, Mickey Danyluk, (telephone conversation, March 10, 2017) told me that parts of Mr. Hayden’s book can be difficult for a modern reader to understand, because the physical layout of Windsor Locks in the 1700s and early 1800s was much different from the current layout. He said that to really understand “Historical Sketches,” one needs to have knowledge of the Dexter family, the Haskell family, and the houses and other buildings that existed in the 1700s and early 1800s. In the preface to his book, My Hayden said:

These fugitive sketches, which have been written from time to time for the Windsor Locks Journal, or taken from papers read before some public gathering, have been deemed worthy of preservation for their historical value, and the publisher has ventured to offer them in book form to the public.

These sketches comprise reminiscences of my own long life, (89 years) the traditions of former generations of my ancestors, together with researches among the Windsor and other ancient records. I am of the seventh generation from William Hayden, who came out from England in 1630 with the church and people which came to Windsor, Conn. in 1635.

The chapters of “Historical Sketches” are:

- Settlement of Windsor
- Early River Navigation
- Early roadways in Windsor
- Historical Sketch - the “Plains”
- Historical Sketch - Early Mail Facilities
- Recollections of a long life
- Slavery in Connecticut
- Historical Sketch - The Old Fording Place
- An Old Time Sunday
- Historical Sketch - The old County Milestone

- Indian Graves
- Church History
- Revolutionary Soldiers
- Notes

Given that this excellent history of Windsor Locks can be read on-line or downloaded for free, it is very worthwhile for any Windsor Locks citizen to read it, even if some parts might be fully understood. Mr. Hayden's book was the first history book on Windsor Locks. The book that you are currently reading is the second.

Two Centennial Pamphlets on the History of Windsor Locks

The history books by Dr. Stiles and by Mr. Hayden were written in 1859 and 1900 respectively. They covered the very early history of the area, including the time before Windsor Locks was incorporated. The first had about 2400 pages and the second had about 130. Both covered the time period from the early 1600s to the mid/late 1800s. The two pamphlets to be considered here were written much later. One was written in 1954, and the other in 1976. Each begins with a short article on the history of Windsor Locks. The article in the 1954 pamphlet is about 14 pages in length and the other is about 12 pages. Both are much shorter than the books by Dr. Stiles and Mr. Hayden, and yet they cover much longer periods of time. They cover from the early 1600s to 1954 and 1976 respectively. That is a lot of history to cover in a dozen pages.

The 1954 and 1976 pamphlets can be thought of as a pair, since they have a number of similarities. The first was written in 1954 to celebrate the Centennial of the incorporation of Windsor Locks in 1854. The second was written in 1976 to celebrate the Bicentennial of the United States, which was formed in 1776. Each was written by a "centennial committee". Neither lists an author. Neither use references to earlier histories. These were not meant to be "history books". They were informal documents which were produced as mementos of two centennial celebrations. The 1954 pamphlet has an excellent description of Windsor Locks in the year 1954, and the second contains an excellent description of the town in 1976. Both pamphlets are about 125 pages long, and each has a number of very nice photographs of the town.

1954 History Booklet Celebrates the Windsor Locks Centennial

The 1954 pamphlet was entitled "The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1954". It was published in 1954, but it doesn't say who published it. It lists the 28 people who were on the Historical Subcommittee of the Windsor Locks Centennial Committee. Presumably, it was that committee which authored the document. Presumably, each person was responsible for a section of the document, but there is no way to know.

The first section is a thirteen page writeup of the history of Windsor Locks from 1663 to 1954, which is quite interesting. It takes us up to the time when the factories along the canal were doing relatively well, and when the retail stores on the other side of Main Street were at their best. 1954 was a good and a happy time in Windsor

Locks. WWII was over, the town was expanding, and business and social life were vibrant.

The 1954 pamphlet contains valuable information about the 1950s, and it shows a transition from the time of the immigrants arrived in the early 1900s, to the 1950s. The thirteen page writeup on early Windsor Locks history in this booklet is more likely to be read by Windsor Locks residents than the books by Stiles and Hayden. It is difficult to obtain a copy of the booklet, since it is out of print, and is not on the internet. The Stiles and Hayden books are on the Internet and can be downloaded for free. Since they are digital files, they can also be searched, which is a very powerful time-saver when looking up specific topics.

A list of the chapters of the 1954 pamphlet is as follows:

- Historical Sketch
- Church History
- Education
- Major Industries and Businesses
- Fraternal Civic and Service Organizations
- Old Homes and Buildings

Overall, this booklet leaves you with a good feel for life in Windsor Locks in the 1950s, and it provides a brief overview of the history of the town up to that date.

1976 History Pamphlet Celebrates the Bicentennial of the United States

In 1976, the town celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States. Part of the celebration included the writing and printing of a pamphlet entitled: "The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1976". It was published in Windsor Locks in 1976, but it does not say who published it. While the 1954 book gave a list of 24 people who helped write the document, this one does not have a list of people who helped write the pamphlet. The Foreword says: "The combined effort of many people has produced this booklet which, it is hoped, will bring lasting enjoyment, and , at the same time, serve as a treasured memento of our Town - Windsor Locks, Connecticut in 1976".

The pamphlet begins with a few pages which list the various town officials and its boards and committees. The sections of the booklet are:

- Pictorial highlights
- Historical Sketch (about 12 pages including photos)
- Religious Life in Windsor Locks
- Education - Windsor Locks Public Schools
- The Canal and the Industries Along it
- Redevelopment in Windsor Locks (Main Street stores were being torn down)
- The Fire and Police Departments
- The Public Library
- Service and Other Organizations

This pamphlet uses a larger format than the 1954 booklet. It is closer to 8 1/2" x 11" which allows for larger photographs. It contains a good set of old photographs of

the town, and a set of photographs from the 1954 pamphlet. It has an overview of the history up to the point it was written, and it gives a good feel for Windsor Locks in the mid-1970s. One can easily see the major difference between Windsor Locks in the mid-1950s and in the mid-1970s. The factories along the canal were dwindling, and the Main Street was being torn down for “redevelopment”. The town had lost its vibrant downtown atmosphere. However, the aerospace industry around Bradley Field was growing. Like the 1954 booklet, this one has long been out of print. Occasionally one can be purchased on Amazon.

If one is lucky enough to have copies of both books, it is very informative to read them in quick succession, and notice the changes in the town from 1954 to 1976.

Leslie Matthews Stansfield’s Book of Old Windsor Locks Photographs

Images of America: Windsor Locks, by Leslie Matthews Stansfield, was published by Arcadia Publishers in 2003. This book contains a collection of old photographs of Windsor Locks. Each photograph has a caption. Some of the captions only contain a few words. Some contain a number of sentences. This book is not really a “written” book. It is a collection of about 200 old photographs, with descriptions of each photo. It took a good deal of work to find the people and companies in Windsor Locks who had old photographs, and were willing to let them be put into a book. The value of this book is the set of photos that it contains. It would be useful to anyone interested in the history of Windsor Locks. It is occasionally available for sale on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). The last time that I checked (October 9, 2017), there were five copies for sale, with prices ranging from \$50 to \$255. This was a commercially produced book.

Conclusions

The annotated bibliography described five publications about the history of Windsor Locks:

1. “The History of Ancient Windsor” by Henry Reed Stiles (1859)
2. “Historical Sketches” by Jabez Haskell Hayden (1900)
3. “The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1954” (1954)
4. “The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663 - 1976” (1976)
5. “Images of America: Windsor Locks” by L. Stansfield (2003)

- All are out of print.
- The first two can be read, searched and downloaded from the internet for free.
- The first is a “dense” book which has three volumes and over 2400 pages.
- The second is the only real “history book” about Windsor Locks that was written prior to the book you are now reading. It was published in 1900. The book you are now reading was published 117 years later, in 2017.
- The second is conversational in tone.
- The third and fourth have brief write-ups on the history of Windsor Locks, and have excellent descriptions of the town in 1954 and in 1976 respectively. There was a big change in the town between 1954 and 1976.

- The third and fourth were written as mementos of the centennial celebrations. They are out of print, but are sometimes available on Amazon.
- The fifth is a book of old photographs of Windsor Locks, each having a caption. It is a photo album, not a history book. It is not available on-line but is sometimes available on amazon.com
- If you are interested in reading a brief history of Windsor Locks, your best alternative would be to go to the Windsor Locks Public Library, and make a xerox copy of the approximately 12 page history in either the 1954 or the 1976 books listed above (numbers 3 and 4).

This chapter only considered publications about the town of Windsor Locks. It did not consider books or articles about specific individuals of the town, or about specific places in the town, such as Bradley Field.

A source of information about Windsor Locks history is the set of documents and photographs which is housed at the Noden-Reed estate in Windsor Locks, which is now the office of the Windsor Locks Historical Association. Their website is:

<http://www.windsorlockshistoricalsociety.org/>

A great place to do research on Windsor Locks history is the Windsor Locks Public Library. Their website is:

<http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/>

They have ample visiting hours and they have a well stocked and well organized set of documents on Windsor Locks history. They also have computers which allow you to access the Internet.

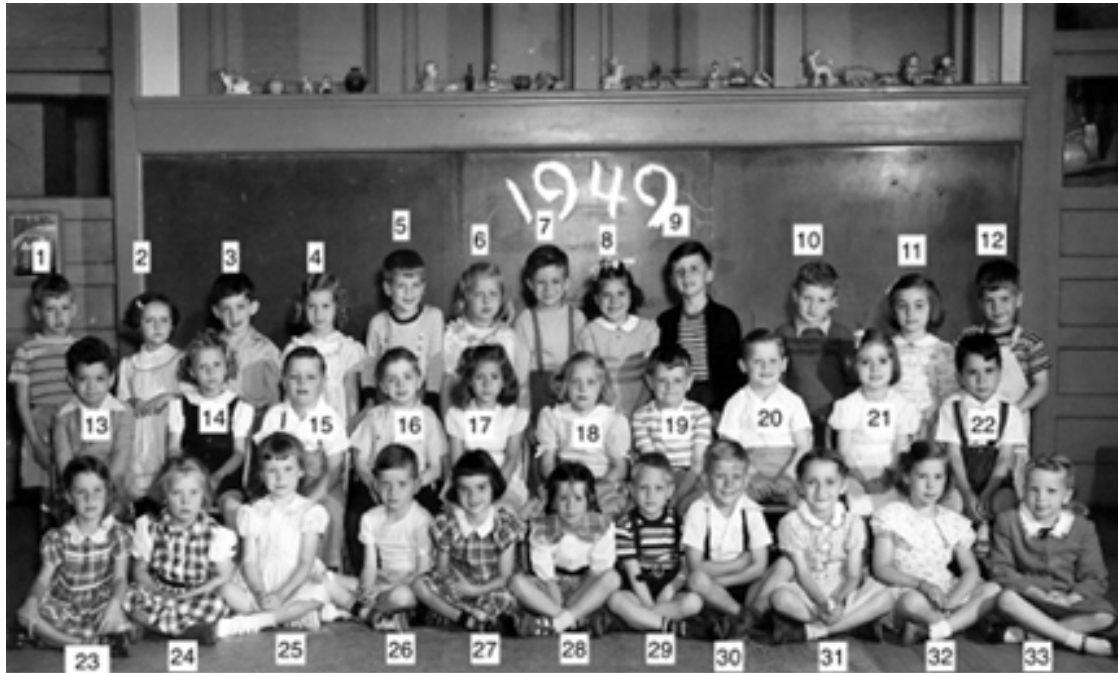
An excellent source of historical material about Windsor Locks is on the Internet. It is called the "Internet Archive". It describes itself as "a non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, software, music, websites, and more." All of the material that it has on-line can be searched on-line, and can be downloaded for free. It can be found at:

<https://archive.org/>

About the Author

My name is Mel Montemerlo. I lived in Windsor Locks from birth in 1943 until I left for college in 1960. My parents were Leo and Lena Montemerlo. We lived at 60 Grove St., across from St. Mary's School. I have two brothers, John and Lenny.

My first memories are from my early school years. I went to Miss Bruce's kindergarten class (1948-49) in the old Public School building on Church Street. Below is a photo of that kindergarten class.



Miss Bruce's Kindergarten Class in Windsor Locks Public School in 1949

The following is an attempt to name my classmates:

2 Barbara Turner, 3 Malcolm Berman, 4 Ann Marie Barbieri, 6 Clair Tomazek, 8 Julie ?, 9 Mark Barberi, 10 Bruce Winters (or his brother), 11 Noreen Baron, 12 Tom Kurharaski, 13 Mel Montemerlo, 15 Ron Pauluh, 16 Carl Richards, 17 Carol Kraft, 18 Jane Taravella, 20 Brian McKenna, 21 Leila Ferrari, 22 Joe Tria, 23 Eileen Courtney, 25 Gloria Babiarz, 26 Donald Pesci, 27 Donna Pesci, 28 Judy Price, 29 Skip Mayoros, 30 Joe Kobos or Jeff Lee, 31 Peggy Draghi, 32 Patty Kane, 33 Susan Root.

After kindergarten, I attended St. Mary's Elementary School from 1949 to 1956. Below is a photo of the First Grade class in 1950, followed by a list of my classmates in alphabetical order. There were two first-grade classes that year. The photo is of both classes.



First Grade, Saint Mary's School, Windsor Locks, Conn. 1950

Catherine Allen, Joe Avore, Helen Babiarz, Kenny Baldwin, George Balf, Ann Marie Barbieri, Noreen Baron, Malcolm Berman, Theresa Carroll, Freddy Colombo, Richard Cummings, Carol Desolt, Peggy Draghi, Alan Dzurich, Leila Ferrari, Tommy Gallagher, John Gokey, Robert Harvey, Patty Kane, Carol Kraft, Barbara Markowski, Brian McKenna, Jimmy McKenna, Mel Montemerlo, Marilyn Morin, Lorraine Norieka, Robert Norris, Sheila Leary, Elaine Ouellette, Donna Pesci, Donald Pesci, Anita Pinati, Chet Pohorylo, Ted Pohorylo, Barbara Quagg, Conrad Quagliaroli, Robert Quagliaroli, Jenny Rabbit, Susan Root, Linda Satonick, Joe Sartori, David Sheridan, Felix Szpanski, Jane Taravella, Wilson Taylor, Robert Tenerowicz, Claire Tomaszek and Joe Tria.

After graduating from St. Mary's, I went to Cathedral High School in Springfield, from which I graduated in 1960. While in high school, I was a member of Joe Avore's Boy Scout troop in Windsor Locks, and I was a member of the St. Mary's Fife and Drum Corps. Later I joined the Golden Lancer's Drum and Bugle Corps.

In 1960, I went to the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. I majored in Mathematics. Washington, DC was my introduction to the world outside of Windsor Locks. Catholic University, which was a very tame environment, made the transition away from home easy.

After Catholic U., I went to the University of Connecticut, to get a Masters Degree in Mathematics. It was inexpensive. At that time, in-state graduate school tuition was less than a \$100 a semester. I played drums in a rock and roll band, was a Resident Advisor in a dorm for a year, and I taught math for one year as a graduate assistant.

In my second year at UCONN, I knew that I wanted to go on and get a PhD, but I was out of money. A friend suggested that I see Dr. Ellis Page, the head of the Educational Psychology department at UCONN, who had money to support PhD

students. I did so immediately. He asked about my educational background and my Graduate Record scores. He said that if I had come to him a week earlier, he would have given me a full fellowship. That was quite disappointing. Then he asked if I wanted to go to the University of Chicago, New York University, or Penn State. That question caught me off-guard, but I had the presence of mind to give him a clear, direct answer. I said: "Penn State". He immediately called his friend, Dr. Frank DiVesta at Penn State, and described my background to him. He asked Dr. DiVesta if he had any fellowships available. He handed me the phone and, said that Dr. DiVesta wanted to talk to me. Dr. DiVesta asked me if the information that Dr Page gave him about me was true. I told him that it was. He asked if I could put informal copies of all of my transcripts in the mail to him by the end of the day. I said: "Yes". Then, in point-blank fashion, he asked: "If I offer you a full fellowship for the Educational Psychology Doctoral program right now, will you accept it?" I enthusiastically answered: "Yes". He replied: "I am looking forward to seeing you here in September." That was one of the most unforgettable days in my life. I got my Masters Degree in Mathematics from UCONN in 1966, and went to Penn State that Fall.

I finished my PhD work at the end of 1969. That year, I married Mary Beth Russell, who was finishing her undergraduate degree at Penn State.

I needed to find a job. I found about 60 potential openings across the United States, and I applied to all of them. I kept all 60 applications in a three-ring binder and waited to see which, if any, would respond. On a snowy day in December of 1969 at Penn State, I got a call from the Link Division of the Singer Corp. They were a leading maker of aircraft simulators for pilot training. I paged through my 60 applications and found the one that I made to Link/Singer. I had answered an ad that said: "Wanted: Aviation Psychologist with minimum of four years experience with simulators". The head of their Human Factors department was on the phone. He said that he was very impressed with my background. That surprised me since I had no background in aviation, and I had never even seen an aircraft simulator. He asked me if I could come to Binghamton, NY for an interview. Binghamton is not far from Penn State. I replied: "Certainly, what time do you close?" He laughed heartily, knowing that the entire area was in a heavy snowstorm. He said, "Next week would be fine. I like your attitude." I went up, had the interview, and got hired."

The next decade (1970-1980) was a difficult one for the aerospace industry. I went through four jobs in that decade, but I got a good background in Human Factors.

In 1979, I saw an opening for a "Program Executive" for NASA's Aeronautical Human Factors research and technology program at NASA Headquarters in Washington, DC. I was working for the Department of the Army at Ft. Eustis, Virginia. A person who lived in my neighborhood, worked at NASA's Langley Research Center, which was nearby. I told him about that opening. He said that he knew of the opening, and he knew the person that I would be working for. He invited me to his home that evening, and said that after he finished briefing me about the job, that I would be able to handle the interview easily. He briefed me. I went for a job interview, and got the job.

I got to work with the Federal Aviation Agency and the National Transportation Safety Board on designing and evaluating new displays and cockpit capabilities for commercial aircraft. This was exciting work, but things got even better. After two years, my supervisor's supervisor asked me if I would like to start up a Space Human

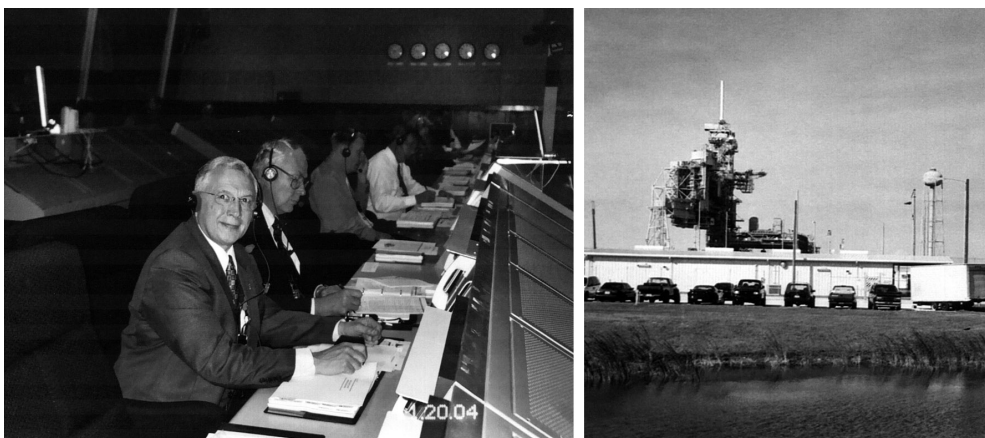
Factors program, and work with the astronauts. Of course, I would. He gave me the job, and I started NASA's first Space Human Factors Technology program. I moved from working on aviation technology to working on space technology.

I thought that things couldn't get better than that. They did. In 1985, NASA started a new program called "Artificial Intelligence and Robotics," and I was put in charge of it. My program developed new technologies for Space Shuttle Mission Control. It ended up with Johnson Space Center replacing their Mission Control Center, which used a single central computer, with a distributed computer system. We also developed a method of doing planning for the group at Kennedy Space Center that refurbished the Space Shuttle orbiters after each mission. The new method saved over a million dollars a day in scheduling costs. We started a program in small space rovers which developed the technology for the first space rover that landed on Mars. It was called "Sojourner".

All good things must end someday. The Space Technology Development program was revamped and the jobs of the eight Program Executives who worked at NASA Headquarters, were sent to the NASA Centers. Only one job was left at NASA Headquarters. That was the Director of the entire technology program, including: artificial intelligence and robotics, materials and structures, propulsion, power, communications, sensors and human factors. I was given that job. That was an exciting challenge, to say the least. I did that job for a number of years, until the entire space technology program ended. I was getting older, and needed to find a new job at NASA.

My supervisor asked me to have a talk with him. He said that he was going to be the Assistant Director of the Astrophysics Program. I congratulated him. The Astrophysics program develops the satellites and telescopes which looked beyond the Solar System, at the stars and galaxy beyond. He asked me if I'd like to work for him in the Astrophysics Division. My answer was: "Absolutely, yes!"

So the last nine years of my NASA career were in Astrophysics. I was a program executive for a series of Astrophysics spacecraft, as they went through design, development and launch. Below is a photograph of me at Kennedy Space Center, at a Launch Control station for the Swift spacecraft.



Mel Montemerlo in the Launch Control Room, Kennedy Space Center for the launch of his first spacecraft, "Swift". Nov. 20, 2004

After an exciting and satisfying career at NASA, it was time to retire. My transition from work to retirement went smoothly. I had one grandchild when I retired, and six more came quickly.

Besides grandchildren, I have three hobbies: woodworking, antique clock restoration, and genealogy. While working and bringing up three children, time for these hobbies was not plentiful. After retirement, I dove into all three. In June of 2016, *Fine Woodworking Magazine* published a photo of one of my carvings. The mirror frame is about 2 1/2 feet tall. See the photo on the right.

On a trip to Hawaii, my wife and I saw a ukulele player who not only played Hawaiian music, but also jazz and rock. I was inspired by his playing and took up the instrument. Here is a photo of my granddaughter and I, playing our ukuleles.

During my retired years, my wife and I continued our annual visits to my hometown, Windsor Locks, Conn. I have wonderful memories of the town in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, before the downtown section was demolished during the Main Street redevelopment project. I started researching the history of the town and realized that the history of the town from 1900 to 1975 had never been written. I started writing articles about the town's history. Soon after that, I got the idea of turning those articles into a book on the history of Windsor Locks. Finally, the book is complete.

If I had to sum up my life in a single photo, it would be the following one of my family.



Christmas 2015 - My family